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LECTURES

ON

CERTAIN HIGH-CHURCH PRINCIPLES

COMMONLY DESIGNATED BY THE TERM

PUSEYISM.

BY

THOMAS MADGE.

LONDON:


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P R E F A C E.

THE following Lectures are published in compliance with the earnest request of those to whom they were addressed. They were written in the course of each successive week previous to their delivery, and without the slightest view to publication. The reasons for which they were undertaken are stated in the first Lecture. In preparing them for the press, the Author has availed himself of the opportunity of making various alterations and additions, with the view of rendering them less unworthy of the favourable attention with which they were at first received. The po-



pular cast which they necessarily assumed as oral addresses has been retained in their printed form both from the difficulty of reconstructing them without entirely destroying their identity, and because it is for the people generally, and not for the learned particularly, that they are designed.

London, February 20, 1844.

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LECTURES ON PUSEYISM.

LECTURE I.

IN entering upon the present course of lectures, I propose to bring under your consideration a subject which has engaged and which continues to engage a large share of public attention. Doctrines and principles are now advocated by a numerous party in the Established Church of this country which, in many important respects, approach so nearly to those of the Romish Church as to be scarcely distinguishable from them. The party to whom I refer are commonly known and designated by the term Puseyites, from their supposed leader Dr. Pusey; and the peculiar opinions maintained by them, by the corresponding term Puseyism. For the sake of convenience, therefore, I shall sometimes employ these words to denote the high-church principles which have of late been so pro-

minently exhibited and so zealously defended. At the same time I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I mean nothing offensive by the use of such expressions. I adopt them merely in conformity to general usage, and to avoid the circumlocution which might otherwise be necessary.

To some of you, perhaps, the discussion of the subject announced may seem not properly to belong to this place. It may be thought to be purely a Church of England question ; important indeed for the members of that church duly to consider and carefully to examine, but of little moment or interest to those of a different communion. If this were so,—if the principles avowed and defended by the so-called Puseyites applied only to themselves, to the constitution and government of their own church, without injuriously reflecting upon those of other churches, I know not that I should have deemed it advisable or expedient to call your attention to the peculiar views and proceedings of this party. But when they go far beyond this ; when they assume an authority and lay claim to powers incompatible with the rights and liberties of all other Protestant Christian communions ; when they arrogate to themselves an exclusive title to the blessings and hopes of the Gospel, and contend that they alone who receive spiritual instruction at the hands of episcopally ordained

ministers belong to the true Church of Christ, and that all others are to be regarded and treated as heretics and schismatics ; when they tell us plainly that the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of Christian ordinances can be rightfully undertaken by those only who receive their commission from the duly authorized descendants of the apostles ; and that all others calling themselves Christian ministers are to be reckoned usurpers and intruders, venturing to assume an office to which they have no just right or title,—when the privilege of judging for ourselves is preremptorily denied, and the authority of the church or the priesthood is held up as of paramount force and obligation,—then, I say, we,—all of us calling ourselves Protestants, no matter what our peculiar opinions may be,—we are all interested in asking, what do these things mean ? Upon what are such pretensions founded ? What are the grounds and reasons for advancing claims apparently so preposterous and absurd ? There may be those who are inclined only to laugh at and ridicule such notions. They may think them utterly unworthy of any serious consideration, and fit only to be treated with unmingled scorn and contempt.

Deserving of scorn and ridicule as they may be, we must not blind ourselves to the fact that they are held and maintained by a large number of the

English Church, especially of the clergy. Among these are to be found men of distinguished attainments, extensive learning and unimpeachable integrity. If the opinions, characterized by the term Puseyism, had been advanced by a few heated enthusiasts, of no rank or estimation in the world of letters, and remarkable only for the folly and vanity of their extravagant assumptions, it might have been sufficient to regard them with cold indifference, or to turn upon them the look of indignant contempt. But when we see men of high standing in the Established Church, doctors of divinity and professors at the Universities, with multitudes of the inferior clergy, earnestly advocating such claims, the phenomenon, it must be admitted, is a remarkable one, and deserves and demands a serious and searching examination. We may wonder at it. Truly, it is an object of wonder, and the more narrowly we look into it, the more wonderful it appears. Still, there it is, and we must meet it fairly and manfully. It is folly to treat it as if it were a thing of no power or significance. The opinions which it embodies have gained a strong and deep root in the minds of many, and are rapidly and widely spreading around us. What may be the ultimate issue of such opinions, in respect to the religious character and condition of our country, it is of course impossible to foresee. Some may hope that the

discussion and inquiry which they will awaken may eventually be productive of great good. However this may be, one thing seems to be clear, that without such inquiry and discussion, not only will nothing that is good be obtained, but much that is bad will follow. Unopposed and unresisted, the principles of Puseyism may attain such a height of popularity and power as once more to raise up a spiritual despotism, subversive of our Christian liberties, and substituting the religion of the priest for that of the individual conscience.


This system, I say, if not watched and guarded against, may affect us, and our intellectual and religious freedom and independence, in ways that we, at present, think not of. This we know, that of all tyrannies, ecclesiastical tyranny is the most harassing and vexatious. Nothing, be assured, is so much to be dreaded as authority and power when lodged in the hands of a corporation of priests.

The avowed and published opinions of the Oxford or Tractarian Divines have left us in no doubt as to what their views and desires are. There has been no reserve here. Their wishes and intentions have been made plain enough, and should put every man, who values his intellectual and moral freedom, in an attitude of defence. For that defence we should endeavour to qualify ourselves as best we can. The shafts of ridicule will be of little

avail without other and better aids and appliances. We must take into our hands fitter and mightier weapons than these. We must bear in mind, that those we have to contend with are men every way well accomplished for the warfare in which they are engaged. Learned, skilful, subtle in their arguments and abounding in resources, they must be met, if they are to be successfully encountered, with instruments of a similar temper. We must call to our aid learning, research, sober reasoning and logical discrimination. But these, it may be said by many persons—these are not at our command. We have neither the learning nor the leisure which the subject requires. What then are we to do? Are we to yield to what appear to us monstrous and absurd opinions, merely because we have not the time or the opportunity to acquire the information; or to master the reasoning by which they might be effectually opposed and overthrown? No, I answer, certainly not. But observe, this is not the only alternative. It would be a poor feeble way of opposing what seem to us false and pernicious doctrines, to content ourselves with calling them preposterous and absurd. It is easy to apply words like these to any notions that we happen to dislike. No reasonable man should be satisfied with such a mode of attack.

To reject any opinion, gravely advanced and

seriously maintained by a considerable number of thoughtful and instructed men, merely because it jars with our preconceived views and notions, can scarcely be considered as either just or reasonable. Truth can never be served by such an idle, pitiful homage as this. What then,—you may ask,—what are we, who are out of the schools of learning and criticism, to do? I answer, avail yourselves of the learning, the information and the arguments of others. This you can do, and with but little cost of time or trouble. In fact it is what all do, and must do more or less in the pursuit of knowledge and truth. No man, on all occasions, thinks it necessary to have recourse to the first and original authorities: he must frequently depend upon those which are at hand, which lie more conveniently within reach. It is what I myself shall be obliged to do in the course of these lectures. If, before making any statement or coming to any conclusion, I were in all cases to wait till I had consulted the original documents or writings referred to, and had ascertained by my own personal examination the correctness of the facts or data spoken of, years would be required for the execution of the task which I have now undertaken. For the principal events in ecclesiastical history, I shall be satisfied with appealing to such authorities as Lardner, Mosheim, Neander, Waddington, and other



well-known and accessible works, not doubting that, generally speaking, they are perfectly faithful and trustworthy in their historical relations. For common purposes, this is all that seems to be needful. At times indeed and upon very nice points, where the judgement to be formed depends upon the construction of a word or the turn of a sentence, it may be necessary to go further than this ; but commonly, and in regard to all the most important questions that concern us, the authorities which we have readily at our command will be amply sufficient to enable us to come to a just and satisfactory conclusion.

How many theologians, for instance, rely upon such testimony as that of Griesbach in deciding whether a given reading in the New Testament be the true one or not ! How many are there who, without the slightest hesitation, condemn as spurious the text of the three heavenly witnesses*, though perhaps they have never seen a single manuscript from which that text is absent ! They rely upon the testimony of competent and faithful witnesses, who depose to the fact of its non-appearance in all the most ancient manuscripts and versions, and they exercise their own judgement in drawing from this circumstance the conclusions which it may seem to warrant. In fact our inquiries and

* 1 John, v. 7.

researches could scarcely be carried to any considerable extent, if we were to proceed in a different manner. What I propose, then, upon the present occasion is, to furnish you with such facts and statements and arguments, as, by the exercise of your own understandings, will enable you to pronounce whether the system called Puseyism be one entitled to your favour and acceptance, or one deserving of your reprobation and rejection.

My first object will be to make you acquainted with the leading principles of the Puseyite or Oxford school, so far at least as they relate to the authority of the church or clergy, and to point out the tendencies which it clearly manifests. In the sixty-fourth number of the 'British Critic' (the generally understood organ of the Puseyite party) we read, "It is now about ten years since certain members of the University of Oxford began to put forward, by means of Tracts and other publications, various high-church doctrines which all agree had been for a long time laid aside or but indifferently maintained in our church; these doctrines are mainly, baptismal regeneration, the real presence, the eucharistic sacrifice, tradition, church authority, and apostolic succession." "There are few," says Professor Powell in his work on 'Tradition,' "who have not heard something of these questions. Those periodicals which are chiefly devoted to religious and

theological subjects have been full of them. Even the daily journals have from time to time resounded with the mention of the 'Oxford Tracts' and the names of their principal supporters. There have gone forth among the public at large impressions of the existence, organization and growth of principles, and a party of the most dangerous tendency, originating within the pale of the Church, and extending even to both the ancient universities. They are commonly supposed to aim at little less than the complete revival of ecclesiastical authority and discipline, long consigned to oblivion; and a gradual, or if possible, an immediate restitution of the very spirit, if not the actual letter, of Romish superstition and papal despotism*."

To Dr. Pusey, the regius professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford, is commonly attributed the origination of the party bearing his name, and about the middle of the year 1833 they organized themselves into a regular association, and began the publication of the Oxford Tracts. To what extent their doctrines prevail I have not had the means of distinctly ascertaining; that they have spread with astonishing rapidity is most certain. A very large proportion of the younger clergy are said to have embraced them. The number of their clerical adherents is reckoned by thousands, and

* Powell's 'Tradition Unveiled,' p. 2.

daily accessions to their ranks are boasted of. Dr. Pusey himself speaks of the extraordinary progress which Anglo-Catholic principles have made in England, and of the sympathy which they have found in the episcopal churches of Scotland and America.

That you may better understand what those principles are, their character and tendency, it may be advisable that I should remind you of the religious parties that appeared in the English Church at and about the time of the Reformation, of the distinction between high churchmen and low churchmen, and of the part taken by Archbishop Laud and others, in the reign of Charles I., to bring the English Church to as near a conformity as possible to the standard of the Romish Church.

How the English Reformation was brought about is probably familiar to you all. Though from the time of Wickliff there had been many, in various parts of England, disaffected to the Romish Church and anxious for a change, that change, even to the small extent to which it was carried, would, in all probability, not have been effected but for the personal interference of King Henry VIII. The object of that odious tyrant, in separating from the Church of Rome, it is not necessary for me to dwell upon. It is sufficient to notice the fact, that what was done, was done in obedience to his will and for the gratification of his vicious inclinations.

Henry, as it has been well observed, determined to be his own Pope. The power and authority which had been possessed by the Roman pontiff were now claimed and exercised by himself. As for the people, they were to believe as he taught and to worship as he enjoined. "The religion established by Henry VIII.," says Lord John Russell, in his Essay on the English government, "was so far from being the Reformed Church of Luther or of Calvin, that he prided himself in maintaining the Roman Catholic faith after he had shaken off the supremacy of the Pope. His ordinances, indeed, vibrated a short time between the old and the new religion, as he listened more to Cranmer or to Gardiner ; but the law of the six articles, which contains the creed he finally imposed on his people, maintains and confirms all the leading articles of the Roman belief." Edward VI. was not only friendly to the little Reformation which had been effected, but was desirous of carrying it still further. All progress, however, in this direction was arrested by his successor Queen Mary, and under her auspices the Romish Church resumed very nearly its former position. On the accession of Queen Elizabeth affairs took another turn. Her own legitimacy and title to the crown being identified with a denial of the Pope's authority, led her, in spite of the strong bias she had for the Romish doctrines and ceremonies, to espouse the side of

the Reformation. The Protestant exiles—who had sought refuge in foreign countries from the persecutions to which they were exposed at home—were allowed to return, but were not permitted to make any change in doctrine or worship. An act was soon passed establishing the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Queen, and this was a power of which Elizabeth was exceedingly proud and upon which she set the highest value. In the early part of her reign the clergy in convocation passed and presented to the Queen five articles respecting the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the authority to be exercised by the "successors of the apostles," which it would be difficult to distinguish from the Romish doctrines of transubstantiation and the church's infallibility. Notwithstanding however these manifest indications of their leaning towards the Papacy, when they were required to take the oath enjoined by the Act of Supremacy and to renounce the spiritual as well as temporal authority of the Pope, they generally submitted with the exception of all the bishops but one, and about two hundred of the other members of the clerical body* ; thus furnishing another

* As it is computed that there were at this time upwards of nine thousand beneficed clergymen, the number who refused to take the oath of supremacy is very inconsiderable. "Of the rest," says Echard in his 'History of England,' "that is, of those who submitted, it was strongly believed that the greatest part complied against their consciences, and would have been ready

proof of the readiness with which ecclesiastics in that age, as in the preceding ones of Henry, Edward and Mary, adopted or professed any opinions which the reigning monarch might choose to set up. The Reformation in England, such as it was, was not accomplished by the efforts of the clergy, but in spite of them. Sir Michael Foster, esteemed one of the greatest of our constitutional lawyers, concurs in this opinion. He says, "I believe it will appear that the great work of the Reformation was chiefly conducted by lay counsels in opposition to the clergy. They were active in none of the changes except in the restoration of Popery under Queen Mary, and in the cruelties of her reign*." As before observed, most of the bishops, in the early part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, having refused to take the oath of supremacy, vacated their sees, several of which were filled up by some of the exiles who had lately returned to England. Of these Grindal was made bishop of London, and Jewel, of Sarum. Now these bishops had contracted, while abroad, a strong aversion to many of the Romish rites and ceremonies which were still retained in the English Church, and were anxious to be re-

for another turn, if the Queen had died while that race of incumbents lived and the next successor had been of another religion."

* See his 'Examination of Bishop Gibson's Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani,' p. 45. This little work of Sir M. Foster is to be found in a volume entitled 'Tracts for the People.'

lieved from them ; indeed most of the leading men were at that time desirous of simplifying the church ceremonial,—Archbishop Parker, with the Queen, standing almost alone in maintaining it. Nor was this altogether a new feeling. It existed with many as far back as the time of Henry VIII. Among this number, perhaps, may be reckoned Latimer, Ridley, Hooper and Coverdale, men to be had in grateful and lasting remembrance for their learning and virtue, their labours and their sufferings.

You will observe then, that almost from the very first there were two, or I might say, three parties in the Church of England.

First, the high-church party, who, if not really and in heart Roman Catholics, were for adhering as nearly as possible to the doctrine, discipline and ritual of the Romish Church. In all essential points they were one with the Papacy.

Next there was the low-church party, consisting of those who, like Ridley, Hooper and Coverdale, were for a greater simplicity in the outward forms of worship, and whatever their opinions may have been of the divine origin of episcopacy, regarded the Lutheran and Reformed churches as sound portions of the Christian community. Out of this party sprang another, if indeed it may not rather be considered as a branch of the same trunk, distinguished by the name of Puritans, from their

desire of purifying the church still more from what they deemed Romish corruptions, and carrying to a greater extent the principles of the Reformation.

Now these terms, high-church and low-church, though clearly marking the two parties that existed in the Church of England almost from the very beginning of the Reformation, did not obtain general use and currency till about the reign of Charles I. Of the low-church divines of that period Mosheim says*, “They were zealously attached to the form of ecclesiastical government and worship that were established in the Church of England, and they recommended episcopacy with all the power of their eloquence, but they did not go so far as to look upon it as of divine institution, or as absolutely necessary to the constitution of a Christian church ; and hence they maintained that those who followed other forms of government and worship were not, on that account, to be excluded from their communion, or to forfeit the title of brethren.” Among the low-church divines Mosheim mentions the names of Hales, Chillingworth, More, Cudworth, Gale, Whichcote and Tillotson, than which there are few more illustrious to be found in the annals of the English Church. The learned historian further informs us that the high-churchmen were so called

* See his ‘Ecclesiastical History,’ translated by Maclaine, vol. v. p. 367.

on account of the high notions which they entertained of the dignity and power of the Church, and the extent they gave to its prerogative and jurisdiction. They denied the validity of Presbyterian ordination, and disowned the ministrations of foreign churches.

Of this party the celebrated Archbishop Laud may be considered as having been, in the times of Charles I., the leader and chief. Of the principles of this party Hallam thus speaks : “ It is notorious that all the innovations of the school of Laud were so many approaches in the exterior worship of the Church to the Roman model. Pictures were set up or repaired ; the communion-table took the name of an altar ; obeisances were made to it ; the crucifix was sometimes placed upon it ; the dress of the officiating priests became more gaudy, and churches were consecrated with strange and mysterious pageantry.....The doctrine of a real presence, distinguishable only by vagueness of definition from that of the Church of Rome, was generally held ; prayers for the dead were vindicated by many ; the practice of auricular confession was frequently inculcated as a duty ; in fact there was hardly any distinctive opinion of the Church of Rome which had not its abettors among the bishops, or those who wrote under their patronage*.”

* See Hallam's Constitutional History, vol. ii. pp. 85, 86.

Now I wish you to observe, that it is with Laud and the party of which he is the representative, that the Puseyite or Oxford Divines have closely identified themselves. They are not a new school in the Church of England, but the revival of an old one. Their great apostle, the object of their fond idolatry, their hero, champion, and guide, is Archbishop Laud. Froude in one of his letters thus writes: "I have been reading Clarendon. I am glad I know something of the Puritans, as it gives me a better right to hate Milton, and accounts for many things which most disgusted me in *his*, not in *my* sense of the word, poetry! I adore King Charles and Bishop Laud. As for the Reformers, I think worse and worse of them."

That you may know something more of this almost canonized saint of the Puseyite school, I shall ask your attention for a few moments to a specimen or two, first, of his folly and, next, of his cruelty. On the consecration of a church in St. Giles's, the following piece of ecclesiastical foppery is said to have been practised by him. "At his approach to the west door of the church, some persons who had been appointed for the purpose cried with a loud voice, 'Open, open, ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in!' Presently the doors were opened, and the bishop, with some doctors and principal men, entered. As soon as they were

within the place, his lordship fell down upon his knees, and, with eyes lifted up and his arms spread abroad, said, ‘This place is holy, the ground is holy; in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I pronounce it holy.’ Then walking up the middle aisle towards the chancel, he took up some of the dust and threw it into the air several times. When he approached the rail of the communion-table, he bowed towards it five or six times, and returning went round the church with his attendants in procession, saying first the hundredth and then the nineteenth psalm, as prescribed in the Roman pontifical. After this and some other observances came the sermon, then the sacrament, which the bishop consecrated and administered in the following manner.

“As he approached the altar he made five or six low bows; and coming up to the side of it, where the bread and wine were covered, he bowed seven times. Then, after reading many prayers he came near the bread, and gently lifting up the corner of the napkin beheld it; and immediately letting fall the napkin, he returned hastily a step or two and made three low obeisances. His lordship then advanced, and having uncovered the bread, bowed three times as before; then he laid his hands on the cup which was full of wine, with a cover upon it, which, having let go, he stepped back and bowed

three times towards it. Then he came near again, and lifting up the cover of the cup looked into it, and seeing the wine let fall the cover again, retired back and bowed as before. Then the elements were consecrated ; after which, many prayers being said, the solemnity of the consecration ended *.”

As an example of his cruel and merciless disposition, it will be sufficient to call your attention for a moment to his treatment of Prynne and Leighton.

Prynne was a barrister at Lincoln's Inn, and had rendered himself obnoxious to the high-church party by various publications in reprobation of their principles. Laud was greatly exasperated by this, and determined upon seizing the first opportunity of making him feel the effects of his anger. This opportunity soon presented itself in consequence of the publication by Prynne of a work entitled ‘*Histriomastix*,’ the object of which was to denounce and condemn all such amusements as plays, masquerades and dances. In the course of this work it was found that some coarse expressions had been applied to women-actors ; and as the queen had lately acted a part in a pastoral at Somerset-house, advantage was taken of these ex-

* Abridged from the account given of this transaction in Towgood's ‘*Dissent from the Church of England justified*,’ p. 293—294, 8vo edit.

pressions to inflame the minds of the king and his consort by representing them as a libel directed against her. Of the falseness and baseness of this accusation, no other evidence is required than the fact that the work, from which the passages just spoken of were taken, had been published six weeks prior to this exhibition on the part of the queen*.

Prynne was now committed to prison by a warrant under the signature of Bishop Laud ; and after a twelvemonth's close confinement, a prosecution was instituted against him in the Star-chamber. Prynne solemnly protested his innocence of the charge brought against him. He declared that he had no intention of including the king or queen in the censures he had pronounced. It was all in vain—the voice of justice and mercy was disregarded, and the cry for vengeance and punishment was alone listened to. Prynne was sentenced to be imprisoned during life, to pay a fine of 5000*l.* to the king, to stand in the pillory at Westminster and have one of his ears cut off, and after a short interval to have the same punishment repeated in Cheapside. All this the sturdy Puritan underwent with the firmness of a martyr and the patience of a saint. His body might be mutilated, but his spirit remained unchanged: that, no sufferings could dismay or subdue. It defied even the vengeance

* See Brodie's History of the British Empire, vol. ii. p. 324.

of Laud, and the pain and ignominy through which he passed did but add in the end to the dignity of his own character, while it fixed an indelible brand of infamy and meanness upon his perfidious and merciless persecutors.

Passing by other instances of Laud's cruelty, I shall briefly notice his conduct towards a Scotch divine of the name of Leighton. This Dr. Leighton had published a book against the bishops, entitled 'Sion's Plea against Prelacy.' For this he was apprehended and committed to Newgate. After lingering there some months, he was brought before the court of the Star-chamber and sentenced to undergo the same kind of punishment as that described in the case of Prynne. As soon as sentence was pronounced against him, Laud, with his accustomed vulgar brutality, pulled off his cap, and holding up his hands, gave thanks to God who had given him victory over his enemies. And he thus coolly notices in his Diary, dated Friday, November 16, 1630, the barbarous punishment that poor Leighton then endured. He says, "Part of his sentence was executed upon him in this manner, in the new palace at Westminster, in term time: 1. he was severely whipped before he was put in the pillory; 2. being set in the pillory, he had one of his ears cut off; 3. one side of his nose slit; 4. branded on one cheek with a red-hot iron; and on that day sen-

night his sores upon his back, ears, nose and face being not cured, he was whipped again in Cheap-side, and there had the remainder of his sentence executed upon him by cutting off the other ear, slitting the other side of the nose, and branding the other cheek." After ten years' captivity Leighton was released by the Long Parliament, but he came out of prison paralytic, blind and deaf*.

And why, in a lecture concerning the principles of the party termed Puseyites, do I remind you of the principles and conduct of Laud? Because this is the man with whom they claim the closest union and fellowship. Because he is ever the object of their veneration and praise. Because they constantly hold him up as an example to be followed by his successors at Lambeth. They call him the great archbishop, the brightest ornament of the Church, and address him as

" Martyr'd Father, holiest man,
Laud, our England's Cyprian †!"

Now of this great archbishop—this brightest ornament of the English Church—this holiest man—this pattern and example of what archbishops should be, hear what is said by two distinguished writers of the present day, both of whom are intimately acquainted with the history of our country, and espe-

* Foster's *Statesmen of the Commonwealth*, vol. i. p. 316.

† *British Magazine* for December 1840.

cially the history of the times of Laud. "His talents," says Hallam, "seem to have been by no means considerable. There cannot be a more contemptible work than his Diary; and his letters to Strafford display some smartness, but no great capacity. . . . Though not literally destitute of religion, it was so subordinate to worldly interest, and so blended in his mind with the impure alloy of temporal pride, that he became an intolerant persecutor of the Puritan clergy, not from bigotry, but systematic policy. And being subject, as his friends call it, to some infirmities of temper, that is, choleric, vindictive, harsh, and even cruel to a great degree, he not only took a prominent share in the severities of the Star-chamber, but, as his correspondence shows, perpetually lamented that he was restrained from going further lengths*."

Mr. Macaulay, after observing that he agreed with Hallam in reprobating the treatment which the archbishop received from the parliament, thus delivers his judgement of his mind and character: "For the individual, indeed, we entertain a more unmitigated contempt than for any other character in our history. His mind had not expansion enough to comprehend a great scheme, good or bad. His oppressive acts were not like those of the Earl of Strafford, parts of an extensive system: they were

* Hallam's Constitutional History, vol. ii. p. 54.

the luxuries in which a mean and irritable disposition indulges itself from day to day,—the excesses natural to a little mind in a great place. The severest punishment which the two houses could have inflicted on him, would have been to set him at liberty and send him to Oxford. There he might have staid, tortured by his own diabolical temper, hungering for Puritans to pillory and mangle, plaguing the Cavaliers, for want of somebody else to plague, with his peevishness and absurdity, performing grimaces and antics in the cathedral, continuing that incomparable Diary which we never see without forgetting the vices of his heart in the imbecility of his intellect, minuting down his dreams, counting the drops of blood which fell from his nose, watching the direction of the salt, and listening for the note of the screech-owls. Contemptuous mercy was the only vengeance which it became the Parliament to take on such a ridiculous old bigot*.”

That any party not utterly blinded by passion and prejudice, and having the slightest regard for the principles of truth and justice, should cherish the memory of such a man with feelings of veneration and affection,—that they should speak of him as the ornament of the English Church,—the great archbishop,—an example to be followed by all who come after him, almost exceeds the bounds of belief.

* Macaulay's *Critical and Historical Essays*, vol. i. p. 170.

Such, however, is the fact. Laud and his school,—these are the watch-words of the present high-church or Puseyite party. I say this not merely from the strength of my own impressions,—not simply because it is a conclusion which I think fairly deducible from the language they employ, but because they themselves avow it, distinctly and emphatically, in so many words. In the sixty-fourth number of the *British Critic* they say, “The present orthodox divinity of our Church is a development since the Reformation, and a reaction upon it. We care not how great innovators the school [of Laud] were considered in their time, or upon how slender a thread they seemed to hang; they succeeded, and their innovation is now our rule. *The Church cannot shake off the Laudian school*: she has identified herself with them; she has accepted their ground, and she stands upon it*.”

By thus observing the men and the party with whom the Puseyites, in a great measure, identify both themselves and their cause, you will learn something of the principles, temper and disposition by which they are distinguished. And that you may have a still further insight into their views and tendency, I will now proceed to show you the intolerant and exclusive nature of the powers and privileges they claim for the Episcopal Church of En-

* *British Critic* for October 1842, p. 345.

gland. According to them there is but one true Christian church on earth, and that is the prelatie. "I am now to speak," says Mr. Palmer, "of the societies which are separated from the communion of the Anglo-Catholic churches. As I shall consider elsewhere the character of the Romanists and the Scottish Presbyterians, it only remains here to treat of the various sects of Dissent. Of these communities, whether collectively or individually considered, I affirm that they are no part of the Church of Christ. . . . Their separation from the Church of England was founded not only in schism but in heresy, and, this being the case, they could not have been any part of the Church, nor were they capable of forming Christian churches*."

The same author, after endeavouring to show that the Presbyterian ministry of Scotland is schismatical and their ordination invalid, concludes with this observation:—"Therefore the Presbyterian establishment, being founded in schism and destitute of an apostolical ministry, constitutes no part of the visible Church of Christ." He then adds:—"With regard to all the other sects in Scotland which have seceded from the Presbyterian community, the same observations apply to them all. Their predecessors, the Presbyterians, voluntarily separated themselves

* Palmer on the Church of Christ, vol. i. pp. 305, 309, 3rd edition.

from the Catholic Church of Christ; and they, in departing from the Presbyterian community, have not yet returned to that of the true Church; consequently they form no part of the Church of Christ*.” The same sentence is passed on the various denominations of English Dissenters; and speaking generally of all the minor sects of Protestants, he says, “It would be impossible, consistently with the maintenance of any principles of unity, order or faith, to allow that they constitute part of the visible Church of Christ†.”

“To call ourselves episcopalians,” say the writers of the *British Critic*, “is to imply that we differ from the mass of Dissenters mainly in church government and form; whereas the difference is, that we are here and they there. We, in the Church, and they, out of it‡.”

In a work entitled ‘*Christian Morals*,’ by the late moral philosophy professor at Oxford, language still more extraordinary with respect to the Church is there to be met with. “Consider,” says he, “the vastness of the power claimed by the Church; a power which places it almost on a level with God himself; the power of forgiving sins, by wiping them out in baptism; the power of bringing down the Spirit of

* Palmer on the Church, vol. i. pp. 443, 444.

† Ibid, Preface, p. 13.

‡ *British Critic* for October 1839.

God from heaven, and incorporating it in the person of frail and fleshly man. Think, I say, of this stupendous power, and then ask, if any human being could dare to assume it without authority from God himself. If such authority has never been given, then the Church is guilty of the most frightful blasphemy that man can conceive. If it has been given, is it not a fearful thing to make light of or dispute it?"

Sentiments similar to these may be found in the writings of Newman and Dodsworth, but the foregoing quotations are sufficient to show what exclusive and extravagant privileges are claimed for the Church by the Puseyite party. After this you will not wonder at the low estimation in which they hold the Reformers, and the language which they apply to the school of what are called the low-church divines, including those of the highest character for learning and virtue. In the Review before-mentioned they say, "Our Reformers were not Puritans or Sectarians themselves, but they let in Puritanism and Sectarianism to a most fearful extent.....It should never be forgotten that the altar of God, standing in the place where it now stands, at the east end of the church, was, by the famous order of Ridley* (the martyr Ridley), pulled down and

* "Why," says Froude, "do you praise Ridley? Do you know sufficient good about him to counterbalance the fact that he was the associate of Cranmer, Peter Martyr and Bucer?"—*Remains*, vol. i. p. 394.

removed, in the form of a communion-table, into the middle of the church. The order was followed in his own diocese, and more or less in most, and of course turned our churches into conventicles. Even to this day, the rubric, which allows the communion-table (even at communion time) to stand in the body of the church, is a memorial of the sectarian spirit of our Reformation." In the same article they call Bishop Hooper an obstinate puritan, a mere dogged Genevan preacher; and they add, "the selection of such a man for a bishop was unworthy of persons who really meant to make a stand for the great principle of external worship." Coverdale, a man of exemplary virtue, deep piety and great learning, whose name is memorable for having been the first English translator and publisher of the whole Bible,—Miles Coverdale, they say, was another bishop of this sort, a thorough puritan and Genevan; "who officiated at the consecration of Archbishop Parker in his black gown." Of Jewel (celebrated for his works in defence of the Church of England) they say, "that the very time he was a bishop and bound by his office to maintain the orders of the Church, he was corresponding with the Calvinists abroad, and longing for a release from its formularies. Let high-churchmen," they continue, "understand this, and then look up to Jewel as a model, if they please; if they

like going flat against their own principles. For our own part we must confess ourselves of the opinion, that a man who dislikes the surplice and talks about the formalities of our service is either a dissenter at heart, or very near one*." Froude goes a step beyond this, and actually designates Jewel "an irreverent dissenter †."

This way of speaking of some of the most distinguished of the early English divines and reformers, and the aversion which they express for the name of Protestant ‡, are in complete accordance with the respect and tenderness which they show towards the principles of the Romish Church, and which, in no material point, seem to be distinguishable from their own; they may differ a little about some unimportant articles of belief and practice, but the

* See British Critic, No. 64.

† "As to the Reformers, I think worse and worse of them. Jewel was what you would, in these days, call an irreverent dissenter. His defence of his Apology disgusted me more than almost any work I have read."—*Remains of the late Rev. R. H. Froude, M.A., Fellow of Oriel College*, vol. i. p. 380.

‡ See British Critic for July 1841, where it is declared that Protestantism is "essentially antichristian,"—"that the Church ought to be unprotestantized,"—"that it must recede more and more from the principles of the English Reformation." And Froude says, "I must go about the country to look for the stray sheep of the true fold; there are many about, I am sure; only that odious Protestantism sticks in people's gizzard."—*Remains*, vol. i. p. 32.

great characteristic principles of each are the same. Obedience to the dictum of the priest, whether delivered through the voice of one or of more than one ; whether proceeding from the Pope, or ecclesiastical councils and synods, lies at the centre of both systems. The authority of the Church, in other words, the authority of the clergy, is the main pillar of the gorgeous structure of Popery, and this too is the basis or foundation of the system called Puseyism.

In Nos. 10 and 17 of the 'Tracts for the times' you will find, in confirmation of what I have now said, various passages, asserting in the loftiest terms the spiritual authority of the clergy. We are told that " we may be as sure that the bishop is Christ's representative as if we actually saw upon his head a cloven tongue like as of fire. The bishop rules the Church here below as Christ rules it above." Of the clergy it is said, that " they have a commission from God Almighty, not only to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments, but to guide the Church." They are entitled and called not only to exhort and rebuke, " but to rule with all authority; and he that despises them, despises the apostles ;" they then express a hope that the time is coming when men will honour the clergy with a purer honour than they do now, viz. " as those who are entrusted with the keys of heaven and hell,

as the heralds of mercy, the denouncers of woe to wicked men, and as entrusted with the awful and mysterious gift of making the bread and wine Christ's body and blood *."

Addressing the ministers of the episcopal church they say, "Exalt our holy fathers the bishops, as the representatives of the apostles and the angels of the churches, and magnify your own office, as being ordained by them to take part in their ministry †." They admit that there is something in this view of their calling that is high and mysterious. It is "a part," say they, "of that ineffable mystery, called in our creed the communion of saints, and with all other Christian mysteries, is above the *understanding* of all alike, yet practically alike within the reach of all who are willing to embrace it by true faith ‡."

In further evidence of their sympathy with and near approach to the Roman Catholic doctrines§,

* "I should like to know," says Froude, "why you flinch from saying that the power of making the body and blood of Christ is vested in the successors of the apostles."—*Remains*, vol. i. p. 326.

† Tracts for the times, No. 1. p. 4.

‡ Ibid. No. 4. p. 6.

§ Of this the Romanists themselves are fully aware, and exult in the prospect which it presents. "It is impossible," says Dr. Wiseman in his letter on Catholic Unity, "to read the works of the Oxford divines without discovering a daily approach towards our holy Church."

we find them declaring not only that the Church forgives sins in the person of Christ, but lamenting that the absolution contained in their service is not strong enough ; that it is a mere declaration, not an announcement of pardon to those who have confessed*. With the Romanists also they are nearly agreed in regarding the ceremony of ordination as a sacrament. They say, “ Ordination, though it does not precisely come within our definition of a sacrament, is nevertheless a right partaking, in a high degree, of the sacramental character†.”

“ I can see no other claim,” says Froude, “ which the Prayer-book has on a layman’s deference, as the teaching of the Church, which the Breviary and Missal have not in a far greater degree ‡.”

“ I see Hammond takes that view of the infallibility of the Church, which P. says was the old one. WE MUST REVIVE IT§.”

“ By the bye, we are not ignorant that the ancient fathers generally teach that the bread and wine in the Eucharist, by or upon the consecration of them, do become, and *are made* the body and blood of Christ ||.”

* Tracts for the times, No. 3. p. 2.

† Ibid. No. 5. p. 10.

‡ Froude’s Remains, vol. i. p. 402.

§ Ibid. p. 322.

|| Froude’s Remains, vol. i. p. 363. This also appears to be the opinion of Dr. Pusey himself; for in his letter to Dr. Jelf he quotes with approbation the following statement :—“ It is by no

After this it is not to be wondered at that the party to which Froude belonged gave utterance to such thoughts and wishes as the following. "The vaunted antiquity, the universality, the unanimity of their Church (referring to that of the Roman Catholics) puts them above the varying fashions of the world and the religious novelties of the day; and truly, when one surveys the grandeur of their system, a sigh arises in the thoughtful mind to think that we should be separate from them*."

I might go on to cite many other passages from the writings of the Oxford divines to prove the identity, in all its leading features, of Puseyism with Romanism; but as there can be no need of this, I shall content myself with one more reference

means to be denied that the elements are really changed, translated, turned and converted into the body and blood of Christ.Yet is not this change destructive of the bodily substance of the elements, but cumulative of them with the spiritual grace of Christ's body and blood." One fears to call this absurd because of the difficulty of annexing any clear distinct ideas to the language employed. But the following passage from Newman is either still more unintelligible, or still more revolting to common sense. He maintains, in Tract 90, that the body of Christ is, in a mysterious manner, *really*, if not *locally* present; and adds, "the true determination of all such questions may be this,—that Christ's body and blood are locally at God's right hand, yet *really* present here; present here, but not here in place, because they are spirit." From this jargon of words what possible meaning can be extracted?

* Tracts for the times; No. 20, p. 3.

to Newman, who ranks as one of the chiefs or leaders of this section of the English Church. He calls the Bishop of Rome the head of the Catholic world, and says, "the authority of the Fathers of the first six councils, and of the judgements of the Church generally, the inspiration of the Apocrypha, the sacramental character of marriage and other ordinances, the real presence in the Eucharist and the Church's power of excommunicating kings, are all taught in the homilies*."

This passage is found in the notorious Tract 90. It is throughout a covert apology for all the principal doctrines of Romanism. It was felt, even by the bishops themselves, to be rather alarming: they began to think that the Tractarians were going too fast, if not too far; and the consequence was a sort of interdict by the Bishop of Oxford against the further issue of such publications; and with this famous number ninety, therefore, the series of 'Tracts for the times' has, for the present, terminated.

There is one other feature of the system under review to which I must for a few moments direct your attention, and that is, the avowal, the distinct and explicit avowal on the part of the leading Puseyites, of the principle of persecution; of the right of the Church to enforce conformity to her doctrines

* Tract 90. p. 75.

and decrees by means of coercion and punishment. This is the worst part of their system. Its dogmatism is bad enough. Its arrogance is still worse. Its lordly assumptions yet more hateful ; but its assertion of the right to compel assent and obedience by calling to its aid the power and authority of the civil magistrate is most detestable of all, and should draw down upon it the frown of our sternest, deepest indignation.

In proof of the accusation thus brought against them, I will first refer you to a passage contained in the sixty-fourth number of the British Critic. It had been said in the Quarterly Review, that the Church is not now in a worse position with respect to the State than it was in the days of Whitgift and Hooker. Upon this the British Critic observes, “ Now with all deference to the respectable quarter from which this assertion proceeds, we cannot call it anything else than a palpable and egregious mistake. The Church *is* in a very different and in a much lower position, with respect to the State, than it was in the times of these divines. Then it was *co-extensive and identical* with the State : when men ceased to be members of the former, they were also deprived of their position in the latter ; a seceder from the Church was, as such, a criminal and a malefactor. The king, the council, and the parliament were all not only necessarily churchmen, in com-

mon with the rest of the nation, but churchmen bound officially to protect the Church, and put down her enemies. We put it then to any person, as a simple question of fact,—Is or is not this order of things reversed? Are persons now obliged to go to church in order to escape going to jail? Are even ministers, privy councillors, members of parliament, magistrates, or any class of civil functionaries, obliged to be churchmen?*”

Of this passage it may be said, perhaps, that the questions asked in it are asked without any intention of expressing a desire that they should *now* be answered in the affirmative. There is no positive approbation of the principle involved in them. Then why not have said so? Why not have guarded against such a construction of their meaning by the most explicit disavowal of it? Why not, in calling to remembrance the power formerly exercised by the Church, or rather by the State on behalf of the Church, have accompanied it with a declaration that they had no wish to see such power revived and restored? Why not have denounced it as one of the greatest calamities and curses that could be inflicted upon a Christian people? But not only is there no such righteous indignation expressed, not only is there no such caveat put in, but the questions are evidently asked complainingly, as

* British Critic, No. lxiv. p. 321.

if the Church had been wrongfully deprived of this aid and co-operation of the State. And that this view of the passage is correct, may, I think, be fairly inferred from the avowal of similar sentiments and the use of similar language by other distinguished divines of the Puseyite school. Palmer, in his treatise on the Church, after mentioning various laws relating to its discipline and doctrine, which still exist, goes on to observe, that, "in accordance with the principle involved in these laws, and in the articles and canons of the Church of England, the State has a right, when necessary, to oblige the members of the Church, by temporal penalties, to submit to her ordinances, and neither to establish a different worship nor teach different doctrines from hers." You may say, perhaps, that he here limits and confines this State interference to members only of the Established Church, which, being in connection with the State, patronized and endowed by it, cannot justly complain if her members are required to comply with the conditions annexed to this alliance. But the very next sentence to the above will show that no such limitation is intended; that he not only means that those who continue in the Church should be coerced and restrained by the civil magistrate from disobeying her laws and ordinances, but those likewise who wish to withdraw from it. He says, speaking of the Church of England, the

State “ has a right to prevent persons from separating from her communion and from troubling the faithful, sowing dissension in the community, and misleading the ignorant and weak-minded brethren*.”

I may perhaps be told, that notwithstanding these passages, our author still advocates the cause of toleration and maintains the unlawfulness of persecution. In appearance, I admit, he does,—but that it is only in appearance is evident from the qualifications with which it is accompanied and the grounds on which it is supported. He says, “ if experience show that penalties have in vain been employed to secure obedience ; if a schism be *formed* and *established* ; if it be obviously in vain to expect any good results from measures of compulsion ; Christian charity, as well as sound policy, would enjoin the *toleration of incurable errors*. Therefore the State of England acted well in relieving Papists and other sectaries from the operation of laws which could no longer be useful with respect to them. But though sects may be tolerated by a Christian state, they ought never to receive from it favour, encouragement, or the means of injuring the true Church established†.”

It will be perceived, then, that he does not argue

* Palmer on the Church, vol. ii. p. 274, 3rd edit.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 275.

against intolerant and persecuting laws because they are intrinsically bad—because they are essentially and universally wrong, opposed to the will of God, at war with the spirit of Christ, subversive of the rights of man, and incompatible with human ignorance and frailty. What he does say against them is altogether founded on their practical inefficacy and consequent inutility. Persecution has not succeeded in extinguishing the light within us; it has not succeeded in crushing the spirit of intellectual freedom; it has not succeeded in securing unity of opinion or uniformity of profession. The anathemas of the priest have been issued in vain, and the cry of heresy and schism has been laughed to scorn. The miserable enginery of pains and penalties has been powerless to subdue the rebellion of conscience against ecclesiastical usurpation; and therefore, perhaps, it may as well be let alone. This is the utmost extent to which our author's liberality goes, if indeed it can fairly be considered as going so far; for when he comes to notice the objections which Locke and others have made to the magistrate's interference in religious concerns, he seems in his answers to justify, not only the favour and patronage of the State in behalf of what he calls the true Church, but the use of pains and penalties in restraining and silencing those who are opposed to it. One of the objections noticed by

him is this: "The Church is a purely voluntary society, for no man is by nature a member of the Church. He joins the society he judges most acceptable to God, and if he finds anything wrong in it, he ought to be at liberty to leave it." To which the answer is, "No man can forsake the Church without committing a grievous sin. The civil magistrate may reasonably restrain such men by temporal penalties, in order to prevent them from disturbing the weak brethren and troubling the Church*."

It would be difficult to distinguish this from the most open and undisguised advocacy of the principle of persecution. The peace of the Church has been at all times the bigot's plea for compulsive conformity and submission.

In one of the 'Tracts for the times,' the writer, referring to those who exercise the right of private judgement, makes this observation: "Such trouble-makers of the Christian community would, in a healthy state of things, be silenced or put out of it, as disturbers of the king's peace and restrained in civil matters; but, in our times, from whatever cause, being times of confusion, we are reduced to the use of argument and disputation, just as we think it lawful to carry arms and barricade our houses during national disorders†."

* Palmer on the Church, vol. ii. p. 276. † Tracts, No. 59. p. 3.

Attend also to what Mr. Newman says :—" If scripture-reading has, in England, been the cause of schism, it is because we (the Church) are deprived of the power of excommunicating, which, in the revealed scheme, is the formal antagonist and curb of private judgement*." The same author, in his 'History of the Arians of the fourth century,' speaking of those who denied the doctrine of Christ's deity and what he thought to be the evil consequences of their conduct, says, " It is but equitable to anticipate those consequences in the *persons* of the heresiarchs, rather than to suffer them gradually to unfold and spread far and wide after their day, sapping the faith of their deluded and less guilty followers." That is, as Archdeacon Townsend, in his 'Charge to the Clergy of Allerton,' observes, " it is better to inflict punishment upon the persons of the heresiarchs than to wait to confute their opinions, because those opinions are injurious." Atrocious as this passage is, it is followed in the very same page by one still more atrocious : " In this," says Mr. Newman, " lies the difference between the treatment due to an individual in error and to one who is confident enough to publish his innovations. The former claims from us the most affectionate sympathy and the most considerate attention ; the latter should meet with no mercy. He

* Newman's Treatise on Romanism, p. 170.

assumes the office of the tempter, and so far forth as his error goes, must be dealt with by the competent authority, as if he were embodied evil."

The fiercest inquisitor could not have used language more intolerable,—more hateful than this, or have set up for himself a defence which would better subserve his malignant and cruel purposes.

I have detained you a long time with this exposition of some of the leading doctrines and principles of the party denominated Puseyites ; but it was, in a great measure, unavoidable, as I wished you to see and understand, from what they themselves say, the character and tendency of the system which they are so eagerly and so successfully propagating through the land.

In advancing such views and pretensions one would suppose that, like the augurs of old, they could not, when met together in friendly converse, look each other in the face without smiling. But we are assured that they are in earnest, and in earnest therefore we will meet them. The worst feature belonging to their system is the threatening aspect which it casts upon our civil and religious privileges. It denies and denounces liberty of conscience and the right of private judgement. If it could obtain the power, it lacks not the will to curb and restrain both. It becomes us then to be upon our guard, and to remember that our security

consists in our sensitiveness to the approach of danger. Our religious liberty cannot be preserved without constant watchfulness. If we sleep, the enemy will come and sow tares. If we are careless and indifferent about our religious privileges, we shall forge the fetters of our own bondage, and shall only want, what our indifference will well deserve, a tyrant to come and fasten them upon us. Let us, therefore, look to ourselves and take heed to our ways. Let us resolve never again to be entangled with the yoke of bondage, but steadily to maintain and firmly to hold fast the liberty with which Christ has made us free.

LECTURE II.

HAVING in the preceding lecture laid before you a statement of the leading general principles which are held and maintained by that section of the Church of England now commonly known and distinguished by the name of Puseyites, I shall now proceed to inquire more particularly into the grounds and reasons on which those principles are supported and defended. There is one word which is used by them so often and in such a manner as to render it proper and expedient that we should begin our examination of their system by an inquiry into its scriptural meaning. The word to which I refer is the very common and familiar one of the Church. What is this? what are we to understand by it? what is its use and signification in the New Testament? I ask these questions because when we hear, as we are continually hearing, of the authority of the Church, of the decrees of the Church, of the voice of the Church, we are apt to think of some corporate body or society, endowed with peculiar powers and privileges, and altogether distinct

from the greater or lesser communities of Christian believers. There are few general or abstract terms which have been more perverted and abused than this of the word Church. From this perversion and abuse the Oxford divines are by no means exempt. In saying this I do not mean that, when formally defining the word, they are so absurd as to give it a meaning altogether different from that which is its undoubted signification, but that in the abstract form in which they so commonly use it, it appears as the representative of some mystical entity,—what it is no one can tell, or where it is no one can say,—whose voice, as declared by them, is to awe and subdue the minds of the people into reverential acquiescence and obedience.

What then is the original and scriptural meaning of this word Church? I answer, that in its original acceptation it signified an assembly of any kind; afterwards, and among the first Christians, it came to signify an assembly for religious purposes,—for Christian devotion and instruction. In the New Testament we find it used in two senses, denoting sometimes a particular society of Christians meeting together in one place, and sometimes the whole body of Christians considered in their collective capacity. Thus we read of “the Church at Jerusalem,” “the Church at Antioch,” “the Church of Ephesus,” meaning the different societies of Chris-

tians in those places. For the larger and more general meaning of the word we may refer to such passages as these: "Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it;"—"He is the head over all things to the Church;"—"Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God." Here the word Church evidently designates the whole Christian community. In all cases then it means an association of Christians more or less general, and not any particular class or order of men among them. So says Mr. Locke. "A Church," he observes, "I take to be a society joining themselves together of their own accord in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they shall judge acceptable to Him, and effectual to their own salvation." Thus too the ever memorable John Hales:—"The Church," says he, "as it imports a visible company on earth, is nothing else but the company of professors of Christianity wheresoever dispersed in the earth." With this definition both Mr. Palmer in his work on the Church, and the Bishop of London in the first of his three sermons on the Church, *appear* to agree. Mr. Palmer says, "its ordinary application in Scripture is to a society of Christians, or of those who believe in Christ." And the Bishop of London remarks that, "as applied to Christians, it denotes a company of persons believing in Jesus Christ; some-

times the whole body of the faithful in all parts of the world ; and sometimes those who inhabit a particular country or city.”

So far all is well ; and there seems to be, on all sides, a perfect unanimity as to the signification of the word church. But a little further on in the Sermon next to that last referred to, words are introduced, in speaking of the Church, which seem to restrict its meaning within narrower limits than the definition before given. The Bishop there says, “ All local churches which can trace their apostolic descent, and teach the pure word of God and duly administer the ordinances of Christ, are branches of the one holy universal church.” No doubt this may admit of a large and liberal interpretation. Still the language is rather suspicious, and is just of such a nature as to open a way for that narrow and restricted sense which is sometimes put upon the word Church.

When the Bishop speaks of apostolic descent and the due administration of ordinances as characteristic of the holy catholic church, room is instantly made for the advocate of High-Church principles to say to those who are not Episcopalians, “ In your religious assemblies the ordinances are not duly administered, nor can your ministers trace their descent from the apostles. Consequently, your church is not a true church ; forms no part of the

holy catholic church of Christ." And the same observation applies to the language of Mr. Palmer. He too declares that "the apostolic succession of the ministry is a note of the true church and of all the particular churches of which it is composed, so that no community which is without this succession can be a church of Christ*." In addition to this, when we read the following passage contained in the 'Tracts for the times,' we can hardly entertain a doubt that by the Puseyites the episcopal form of church government is deemed to be essential to the constitution of a Christian church "Bear with me," says one of this school, "while I express my fear that we do not, as much as we ought, consider the force of that article of our belief, 'the one catholic and apostolic church.' That is a tenet so important as to have been in the creed from the beginning. It is mentioned there as a fact, and a fact to be believed, and therefore practical. Now what do we conceive is meant by it? As people vaguely take it in the present day, it seems only an assertion that there is a number of sincere Christians scattered through the world. But is not this a truism? who doubt it? who can deny that there are people in various places who are sincere believers? what comes of this? how is it important? why should it be placed, as an article of faith, after

* Palmer on the Church, vol. i. p. 143.

belief in the Holy Ghost? Doubtless the only true and satisfactory meaning is that which our divines have ever taken,—that there is on earth an existing society, apostolic, as founded by the apostles; catholic, because it spreads its branches in every place; that is, the church visible, with its bishops, priests and deacons*.”

Apparently nothing can be better than the following definition of the word Church, as given in the nineteenth of the Thirty-nine Articles:—“The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ’s ordinance.” Unfortunately, however, this definition just leaves an opening for the narrow interpretation before mentioned. It enables the high-churchman to say that he is authorized by this very article to deny to any assembly of Christians the title of a church of Christ in which the sacraments are not administered by episcopally ordained ministers, since it is by such ministers alone that the pure Word of God can be preached and the sacraments duly administered. Now in Scripture not an instance can be quoted where the word Church has such conditions annexed to it. Any number of persons believing in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and assembled together in his name,

* Tracts, No. 2. p. 2.

are called churches, without the addition of a syllable about apostolic descent and the due administration of the sacraments. All this is now supplied with the view of contracting the basis on which the church of Christ was built, and of barring all entrance into it except that which is placed under the guardianship of the priest.

One of the earliest departures from the strict and scriptural meaning of the word Church, consisted in the application of it to the building in which the church met. This was a very natural and perhaps harmless change of the word. But the next step away from its original meaning was far less natural and infinitely more mischievous ; I mean the transference of the term Church from the congregation to those who are called the clergy. "The word Church," as Dr. Arnold observes, "has with many entirely lost its proper meaning, and is constantly used to express only the clerical members of it. This creates an uncharitable distinction between the clergy and the laity, to the equal injury of both."

Now though the Oxford divines cannot deny that the church is the congregation,—that it is an assembly of Christians meeting together by virtue of their relation to one common Lord, yet it is quite clear that they often use it in a sense different from this. They speak much of the authority of the Church, of the judgement of the Church, of the

voice of the Church. Now to what authority, to what judgement, to what voice do they refer? To anything done or said by the people in congregation assembled; that is, by the church properly so called? Nothing of the sort. Men professing themselves sincere disciples of Christ, conscientiously desiring to conform themselves to his laws, and meeting together for the common object of Christian worship and instruction, constitute, according to them, no church of Christ, unless they are governed by ministers inheriting peculiar privileges and powers derived to them by regular succession from the apostles. In answer to this I can say nothing stronger than that I find no such account of the church in the New Testament. There I see, that wherever the people assemble together in the name of Christ, be the number many or few, that assembly is denominated a church, and enjoys all the privileges and advantages pertaining to such a community. Of course every society, whatever its nature may be, requires, for the due order and decorum of its meetings, the observance of certain rules and forms, and the appointment of certain officers to watch over its proceedings and to see that the object of its institution is fulfilled. This being so much a matter of course, and having no necessary connection with the essentials of Christianity, Christ left no specific direction upon the

subject, but simply commanded his apostles to go and teach his gospel to all nations.

These disciples of our Lord may be regarded as the first ministers of the church. They were sent out to preach the gospel, and on that account received the name of apostles. One great object of their appointment was to be witnesses of Christ after his resurrection. This appears from the declaration made by Peter in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles on the election of a new apostle in the room of Judas, and also from the language of our Lord himself, who, addressing his apostles, said to them, "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." From the very nature of the apostolic office, it was necessarily limited to the then existing generation of living witnesses; beyond them it was incommunicable. After the election of Matthias to fill up the vacancy in the apostleship occasioned by the death of Judas, the next appointment of which we have an account is that of seven persons to assist in the proper distribution of the poor's fund. Respecting this fund some misunderstanding had arisen between the Jewish and Hellenistic* Christians, the latter having complained that their

* That is, according to Lightfoot, Grecian Jews—Jews who had resided in countries where the Greek language was spoken.

widows were not justly or equally regarded *. In consequence of this complaint, and the desire of the apostles to be relieved from all cares of a merely temporal nature, the Grecian or Hellenistic converts were advised to choose from among themselves a certain number of persons to whom the duty of attending to their poorer brethren might be safely entrusted. This was accordingly done, and seven persons were appointed for the purpose. To these seven is commonly given the name of Deacons, but in the passage recording their appointment they are not designated by this term. Their office was purely of a temporal or secular nature. They were not chosen for any spiritual purpose, but merely to aid others in affording more equal and extensive relief to the poor.

The ministry of the Church of England is divided into three orders, in conformity, it is said, with apostolic direction, viz. bishops, priests and deacons. Now nothing can show more clearly the miserable weakness of the argument for the apostolic institution of these three orders than that which is urged in behalf of the third order, the deacons. For, in the first place, those who were elected as guardians or trustees for the poor were not in their original appointment called deacons, nor was their office of a spiritual nature; and, in

* Acts vi. 1—7.

the next place, the term Deacon, where it does occur, so far from designating a subordinate class of ministers, is frequently applied to those who are confessedly of the first rank, even to the apostles themselves. Thus Paul speaks of himself as having been made "a minister of the gospel (Greek, deacon) according to the grace of God*." "Who," says he, "who is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers (Greek, deacons) by whom ye believed†?" It is also frequently rendered in our common English version by the word servant. It does not denote then any particular order of men; it is a general term applicable to any minister, teacher, or servant of Jesus Christ.

As Christianity became more diffused and the number of the disciples greatly increased, churches were formed in different parts of the world; and to the care of these churches the elder persons, or those most distinguished for their wisdom and virtue, were commonly appointed. These persons were called presbyters or elders, bishops or overseers, all which terms are in Scripture employed to denote the same office; the first, that is presbyter (which is the Greek word for elder), having reference to the age and character of the person; the latter, that is bishop (overseer), to the office which he sustained. There is then no scriptural ground

* Ephes. iii. 7; Coloss. i. 23. 25.

† 1 Cor. iii. 5.

for any distinction of orders in the ministry at all. According to the New Testament, instead of bishops belonging to one order, the first in the ministry, and presbyters (from which comes the English word priest) belonging to another order, the second in the ministry, bishops and presbyters designate the same class, and are, in a great measure, identical terms.

To the proof of this assertion I will next proceed, after saying a few words respecting the origin of that particular form of church government which obtained in the first ages.

Archbishop Whately has shown in his 'Treatise on the Errors of Romanism' and also Neander in his 'History of the Christian Church,' that the first Christian ministers were not priests*, properly so called, and that in the Christian church such an order of men have no place. It was the synagogue and not the temple which furnished the model of the early Christian churches: that was the place appropriated to the religious instruction of the Jews. The priests of the temple were not the ordinary teachers of the people; they had to attend to the administration of ceremonies and sacrifices,

* "The formation of a priesthood," says Neander, "is foreign to the gospel economy;" and Dr. Arnold observes, "the Christian church was absolutely and entirely, at all times and in all places, to be without a human priesthood."—*Sermons on the Christian Life, Introd.* p. 49.

and not to the business of instruction. Among the Jews that service was rendered by the prophets, and among the heathens by the philosophers and moralists. These are they to whom the Christian ministers may be best likened, and not the priests. The first preachers of the gospel were chosen, not from the sacred tribe of Levi, not from the holy order of priests, but from the people,—from those who could sympathize with the people and find access to the minds of the people.

The first Christian believers consisted chiefly of converts from Judaism, and for a time continued to form a part of the Jewish community, to observe Jewish rites, and to worship in the Jewish synagogues. When at length they formed churches of their own and met together to worship God in the name of Jesus Christ, they naturally adopted as many of the usages and institutions to which they had been accustomed as convenience and fitness dictated. The elders of the synagogue, take notice, were not priests. No peculiar sanctity attached to them ; that belonged only to the priests of the temple, an institution which “ stood in meats and drinks and fleshly ordinances.” The elders of the synagogue were pastors and teachers, and in that character only the first Christian bishops or presbyters were recognised and regarded.

I now come to the proof of the original identity

of these terms. Nelson, in a well-known book entitled 'Fasts and Festivals of the Church,' lays down this proposition :—"That in the apostolic age there were three orders in the ministry, bishops, priests and deacons ; distinct and subordinate, deriving their commission from God, and claiming the reverence and obedience of the people."

Concerning the last of these orders, as they are called, I have already shown that no scriptural foundation for it exists,—that those who were chosen trustees for the poor, as recorded in the book of the Acts, are not there denominated "deacons ;" and moreover that the word itself is used in Scripture in so general and enlarged a sense as to include ministers or servants of various kinds, not excepting even the apostles themselves, who, I suppose, will not be placed by any episcopalian in the third or subordinate class of the ministry. It is, I think, equally clear, that neither is there in the New Testament any ground for the alleged distinction between bishop and presbyter, constituting, as we are told, the first and second order in the ministry ; but that these two words are characteristic of the same office and applicable to the same persons.

The term Bishop occurs once in the Acts of the Apostles and four times in the Epistles of Paul, and the connection in which the word stands in all these places, proves that it denoted a presiding

officer of a single church or society, and not a ruler of other officers of the church, or a number of churches. The Greek word 'episcopos' may be rendered most expressively and literally by the English word over-seer. And the question is, whether this oversight or superintendence was to be exercised over a single society of Christians, or over a number of churches and ordained ministers?

In the Acts of the Apostles* we read, that Paul, addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus, said, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers," that is, bishops. The church at Ephesus therefore had several bishops or elders; and these bishops, observe, were not, like modern bishops, overseers of other ministers or presbyters, but of the flock, the congregation, the church. These two words, then, elders and bishops, are used of persons holding the same office. The title of elder or presbyter is one of respect borrowed from the synagogue; and the title bishop or overseer refers to the duty of overlooking, or taking the charge of a Christian church. In further confirmation of this position we may cite the words of Peter†, who, addressing the elders of the church, says to them, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof;" literally,

* Chap. xx. ver. 28.

† 1st Epistle, chap. v. ver. 2.

performing the duties of bishops. If the elders were to do the work of bishops, the fair inference is, that they *were* bishops, persons holding that office and sustaining that character. So Paul, in his Epistle to Titus*, uses the words elder and bishop interchangeably. He directs that elders of *blameless character* should be appointed in every city, "because," he adds, "a bishop must be blameless." Thus showing that, with him, elder and bishop were significant of the same person.

From the Scriptures I pass on to consider what is to be found on this subject in the writings of the ancient Christians.

Of the Apostolic Fathers, as they are called, I shall say nothing, because great doubts are entertained of the genuineness of most of the works ascribed to them, at least in their present form. Next after them comes Justin Martyr. Now he speaks of no officers in the church as superior to elders. Those who are well acquainted with his writings assert that he makes no mention, by name, of bishops; and in the account which he has given us of the manner in which Sunday was observed by the early Christians, he calls the person who conducted the services of the church, the president of the brethren.

Irenæus is said to have been ordained by pres-

* Chap. i. ver. 5—7.

byters, and Neander tells us that he sometimes uses the names, bishop and presbyter, as wholly synonymous, though at other times he distinguishes the bishop as the president of the presbyters*.

Jerome, one of the most learned of the Latin fathers, gives the following account of the nature and origin of the episcopal office:—"A presbyter is the same as a bishop, and until, by the instigation of the devil, there arose divisions in religion, churches were governed by a common council of the presbyters; but afterwards, when every one regarded those whom he baptized as belonging to himself rather than to Christ, it was everywhere decreed that one person elected from the presbyters should be placed over the others." Jerome, after assigning many reasons for the opinion thus advanced, adds, "These things we have brought forward to show, that with the ancients, presbyters were the same as bishops†."

To this testimony of some of the ancient Christian writers, I will now give in addition the judgment of several distinguished divines and others of the English Church.

Wickliff rejected episcopacy as a distinct order,

* Neander's History of the Church, vol. i. p. 194.

† See Riddle's Christian Antiquities, p. 187-8; a most useful and excellent work, drawn up by an able and learned clergyman of the Church of England.

and maintained the identity of bishops and presbyters*.

Archbishop Cranmer, in answer to a question proposed to an assembly of divines in the reign of Edward VI., affirmed, "that bishops and priests (*i. e.* presbyters) were at one time, and were not two things, but both one office in the beginning of Christ's religion†."

Bishop Jewel also, in the Defence of his 'Apology for the Church of England,' refers with approbation to the passage before quoted from Jerome, and adds another testimony to the same purpose from Chrysostom, who says, "Between a bishop and a priest (presbyter) there is, in a manner, no difference‡."

Bishop Stillingfleet says, "I believe, upon the strictest inquiry, that Jerome, Austin, Ambrose, Sedulius, Primasius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact were all of Aërius's judgement as to the identity of both name and order of bishops and presbyters in the primitive church§."

* Short's History of the Church of England, p. 63.

† Riddle's Christian Antiquities, p. 191.

‡ The words of Chrysostom, as quoted by Jewel, are these:—"Inter episcopum et presbyterum interest ferme nihil." See Riddle, p. 192.

§ Irenicum, p. 276, ed. 1662. In the year 1641 Archbishop Usher, with the view of uniting the episcopal and presbyterian forms of church government, drew up a plan entitled, "The Reduction of Episcopacy unto the form of synodical government received in the ancient church."

Lord Chancellor King maintains that bishops and presbyters were of the same order, "because," says he, "originally they had one and the same name, each of them being indifferently called bishops or presbyters. Hence we read, in sacred writ, of several bishops in one particular church, as the bishops of Ephesus and Philippi: and Clemens Romanus sometimes mentions many bishops in the church of Corinth, whom at other times he calls by the name of presbyters, using these two terms as synonymous titles and appellations*."

Gibbon the historian, who in this matter may be considered as giving an impartial, unbiassed opinion, says, that "bishops and presbyters were two appellations which, in their first origin, appear to have distinguished the same office and the same order of persons. The name of presbyter was expressive of their age, or rather of their gravity and wisdom. The title of bishop denoted their inspection over the faith and manners of the Christians who were committed to their pastoral care†."

To these I will add only one other testimony, viz. that of the excellent and lamented scholar and divine, Dr. Arnold. He says, "the churches founded by St. Paul were each, at first, placed by him under

* Inquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church, pp. 55, 56, ed. 1839.

† Gibbon's Roman Empire, vol. ii. p. 116.

the government of several presbyters ; but after his imprisonment at Rome, finding that they were become greatly corrupted, he sends out single persons with full powers to remodel these churches, and with authority to correct the presbyters themselves : yet it does not appear that these especial visitors were to alter permanently the earlier constitution of the churches ; nor, that they were sent generally to all the churches which St. Paul had founded. Indeed it appears evident from the Epistle of Clement, that the original constitution of the Church of Corinth still subsisted in his time ; the government was still vested, not in one man, but in many*.”

Respecting the change which early took place in the government of the Church and the probable origin of diocesan episcopacy I shall here say a few words. Both Waddington and Milman, recent writers on Church history, seem to admit the original identity of bishops and presbyters, but are also inclined to think that episcopacy, in some form, was very early introduced into the Christian Church, perhaps even in the lifetime of the apostle John. It may be so ; but then I maintain that the episcopacy so introduced amounted to no more than the presidency of one of the presbyters most esteemed for his standing in the Church and the

* Sermons on Christian Life, Introd. p. 46.

general worth of his character, and was altogether different from the episcopacy of after-times. Admitting, then, that the term 'episcopos,' overseer, became soon to be applied to the presiding presbyter, and by which he was distinguished from the other presbyters, still, I contend, he had as yet no other official character than that which the presbyters had; he was still but the bishop or superintendent of a single church; not "the pastor of pastors," but the pastor of a congregation. He was still only "primus inter pares," first among equals. Even down to the time of Cyprian we read, that nothing of weight was undertaken by the bishops without calling together the presbyters. Cyprian himself says, that it was his constant principle to do nothing without their advice. Speaking of the relation of the bishops to the presbyters, he gives them the appellation of "compresbyteros," co-presbyters*.

Now, I ask, is this the way with modern episcopacy? Do the bishops do nothing without the advice of the presbyters? Do they ever call themselves co-presbyters? If those who assert that no other form of government but the episcopal had ever been known to the Christian Church, mean by this, the episcopal form of government such as it now exists in England, then I can only express the

* Neander, vol. i. p. 195.

utter amazement which such a statement excites in my mind. That soon after the times of the apostles a distinction, which had not before existed, was made between bishops and presbyters is admitted, and the change may be thus accounted for : "At first each church was instructed and governed by a presbyter, or, if the church was large, by a presbytery or council of elders. In course of time and after the removal of the apostles, it became expedient, from the increase of business or other circumstances, that some one member of the presbytery should have precedence of the others and be invested with a certain degree of authority over them.....Besides this, when churches began to multiply in a city or district, it was natural that the chief officer of the oldest church should be regarded as a leader or president of the whole. All these changes actually took place. A presbytery appointed one of its members foreman or chairman ; it then acknowledged him as a representative of the whole body, and afterwards for the sake of good order, and in the natural course of human institutions, it consented to submit to him as governor*." Neander gives very much the same account of the origin of the episcopal office. He says, "Immediately after the apostolic age, the standing office of president of the presbyters must

* Riddle's Christian Antiquities, p. 193.

have been formed, to whom, inasmuch as he had especially the oversight of everything, was given the name of *Episcopos*, and he was thereby distinguished from the rest of the presbyters. This name was then at last exclusively applied to this president, while the name of presbyter remained common to all*.”

After what has now been said in proof of the original identity of bishops and presbyters, it is but reasonable to consider for a moment what has been advanced on the other side. Of course I cannot go into a minute examination of all the reasons that have been urged in behalf of modern or diocesan episcopacy: that would be wholly impracticable within the limits to which I am confined. I think therefore that I cannot do better than bring before you the argument in its favour, on which the Bishop of London chiefly relies, and as it is expressed in the second of his three Sermons on the Church.

He says then, “There is no one doctrine or tenet of the Christian religion in which all Christians were for fifteen centuries so unanimously agreed as in this of episcopacy. At all times and in all parts of the world, however churches might differ in other opinions or practices, all retain their bishops†.”

* Neander's Church History, vol. i. p. 194.

† Sermons on the Church, pp. 33, 34.

In proof of this assertion he appeals to the testimony generally of the apostolic fathers, and also to that of Tertullian and Cyprian*.

Upon this I shall content myself with observing,

* It is hardly ingenuous in the Bishop to appeal without exception to the earlier or Apostolic Fathers as bearing testimony to the prevalence of modern episcopacy, for, in the first place, he could not but have known that to many of the writings which go under their name there attach well-founded doubts of their genuineness and integrity. This is especially the case with Ignatius, the only one of the Apostolic Fathers from whose writings anything favouring high views of the episcopal character can be extracted. No doubt, in his epistles, as they now stand, much pompous and extravagant language about the dignity and authority of bishops is to be found; but then, it is of those writings more particularly that the strongest suspicions of forgery and interpolation are entertained. Out of twelve epistles, five are almost universally considered by the most learned critics as spurious productions, and the remaining seven are generally allowed to be disfigured by various interpolations. So thought Usher, and Archbishop Wake does not attempt to vindicate their freedom from corruption. What argument, deserving the name of argument, can be derived from writings so tampered with as these have been? As to the other two, viz. Clement and Polycarp, the first describes presbyters as ruling over the Church, and uses the term episcopate in reference to the office of presbyters; and the second, Polycarp, is said not even to have used the word bishop, but speaks only of elders and deacons. Was his Lordship of London aware of this? If he was, why did he speak in such general terms of the earlier or Apostolic Fathers, thereby leading to the belief that they all testified to the truth of his assertion? Whereas two out of the three make more against him than for him, and the third may be considered as uttering no authentic voice on the subject.

that if the Bishop means that there was never a period in the early ages of Christianity, not even in the times of the apostles, when diocesan episcopacy did not exist,—when the churches of Christ were not ruled and governed by bishops, such as they now are, the assertion is made not only in direct opposition to what is stated to be the fact by all the learned ecclesiastical historians whom I have had the opportunity of consulting, but contrary to the opinion of the most distinguished divines of his own church. The whole fallacy of his assertion and of the argument founded on it, lies in the latitude or ambiguity of the word bishop. It may mean only the pastor of a single congregation—a parochial minister—a simple presbyter, or it may signify the mitred prelate of modern times, glittering with pomp and splendour and exercising a lordly jurisdiction over his ministerial brethren. For bishop, read diocesan bishop; for episcopacy substitute the word prelacy, and the fallacy becomes immediately apparent; the poverty of the argument is instantly laid bare; the flimsiness of the sophistry is at once seen through. No one, who understands the subject, doubts,—no one denies, that, in the Christian Church, there existed from the very first those who are termed bishops. What is denied is, that they were bishops in the modern use and acceptation of the term. It is

utterly beside the question to say, lo ! there stands the word bishop, either in Scripture or the earliest ecclesiastical writers. Nay, it is scarcely consistent with fair and honest dealing to do so. One would imagine, from the language of the Bishop of London, that he supposes if he can show that there was such a thing as episcopacy in the times of the apostles, or in those immediately following, then he is warranted in jumping to the conclusion that the claims of diocesan episcopacy are completely established. But in speaking of the episcopacy of the apostolic age, the question recurs, What is meant by it? Words, we all know, in process of time, undergo great change in their signification, and carry with them other and different senses at one period from those which they bear at another. To say that there were persons called bishops in the first Christian churches is no doubt perfectly correct. We say so too ; but we say also that these bishops were no more than presbyters, at first simple presbyters, and for some time after only the presiding officer among the presbyters. They were *primi inter pares*, first among equals.

The Bishop however, in saying that “ the government of the universal Church, in the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles, was episcopal,” felt, that in the common understanding of the word, this was too sweeping an assertion, and

that it became him therefore to add something by way of qualification or exception. Accordingly he subjoins this remark on the word 'episcopal,' "*that is to say, abstracting from episcopacy all accidentals and considering only what is essential.*"

Respecting these words I cannot do better than lay before you the comment made upon them in an admirable article contained in the Eclectic Review for September 1842. The writer observes, "The Bishop has not told us what these accidentals are; and truly he was wise in passing them over in silence; they would have formed a tolerably long catalogue, and would have amused and exercised the faculty of abstraction not a little. A modern bishop 'abstracted' from all things acknowledged to be such, and reduced to the dimensions of a diocesan bishop of the second century, would come forth from the process so altered by it that no man would know him again. In order to figure to ourselves such a transformation as shall divest him of his 'accidentals,' we must exercise our faculty of abstraction almost as vigorously as Crambe in Martinus Scriblerus. Martin declared that he had great difficulty in abstracting a lord mayor from his fur gown and gold chain; nay, that the horse he saw the lord mayor ride upon not a little disturbed his imagination. Crambe, to show himself of a more penetrating genius, swore that he could

frame a conception of a lord mayor, not only without his horse, gown and gold chain, but even without stature, feature, colour, hands, head, feet, or any body which he supposed was the abstract of a lord mayor. In like manner we cannot get the 'abstract' of a bishop, even though he be a diocesan bishop of early times, without unswathing him from a world of curious 'accidentals.' We must suppose him *not* to be of the house of lords; *not* troubled with the duties of a secular jurisdiction; *not* surrounded by proctors and lawyers; *not* to live in a palace; *not* to sit on a throne; *not* dignified with mitre and crosier; *not* disguised in lawn sleeves and silk apron; *not* to be in possession of five thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand a year. Truly, these 'accidentals,' thoroughly stripped off, will leave a very different-looking man from a modern bishop, but we should have a far better chance of detecting and appreciating his essentials*."

So much for the Bishop's argument in favour of the divine institution of modern episcopacy. The truth of the matter seems to be this: "Under the genus Bishop there is first the Scripture bishop, which is a presbyter; next, there is the primitive bishop, which is a presbyter acting as the moderator or president of his brethren; and, thirdly, there is

* Eclectic Review for September 1842, p. 306.

the prelatic bishop of after-times, the lordly claimant to apostolic authority and jurisdiction." Now the first is as different from the last as any two things, bearing the same name, can well be.

The next question for consideration is, how were the primitive bishops or presbyters elected? What was the mode of their appointment? Here again the high-church divines lay claim to certain extraordinary and exclusive privileges, founded, as you will presently see, upon groundless and unauthorized assumptions.

The Bishop of London, in his third Sermon on the Church, says, "It was never even thought of that there could be a church without a bishop, nor that any person should claim authority to minister the Word and sacraments who had not been ordained by a bishop." (Of course by the word "bishop" his Lordship must here mean bishop according to the present use and acceptance of that term.) In Tract 19 the necessity of episcopal ordination to constitute a minister of Christ is strongly insisted on. In No. 7 it is affirmed "that the Church has from the first committed the power of ordination to the bishops;" and in No. 36 we are told that "by maintaining the validity of ordination by elders only, we err in a fundamental doctrine." These assertions are not only repeated again and again, but are sometimes given forth

with an air of peculiar earnestness and imposing solemnity. Thus in Tract 35 it is said, "A person not commissioned from the bishop may use the words of baptism, and sprinkle or bathe with the water on earth, but there is no promise from Christ that such a man should admit souls into the kingdom of heaven. . . . And as for the person who takes upon himself without warrant to minister in holy things, he is all the while treading in the steps of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, whose awful punishment you read of in the book of Numbers."

Now upon this I observe, in the first place, that if what has been before stated with regard to the original identity of bishops and presbyters be correct, it follows that ordination, whatever be its meaning and intent, was not what is now called episcopal ordination. But with this reply, sufficient as it is, I shall not content myself. I shall show that ordination by presbyters or elders is distinctly spoken of in the New Testament. I shall show that the rite itself was merely a becoming solemnity, derived from the practice of the Jews, recognising the appointment of some individual to the ministerial office, and marking the sanction given to such appointment by the assembled presbyters or elders. The imposition of hands with which it was accompanied was expressive more particularly of the benediction invoked on the per-

son ordained, and did not import that any additional gifts or graces were thereby conferred.

With respect to the mode of appointing officers in the Christian Church in the first ages, it is, I think, clearly established that it generally took place by means of popular election. For though, in the New Testament, no direct information is given as to the way in which the minister or pastor of a church was chosen, we do see that the choice of other officers or functionaries was determined by the suffrages of the people. This was the case in regard to Matthias, who was not elected to the apostleship till the consent of the Church at Jerusalem had been first obtained*. The same mode of proceeding was observed on the appointment of certain persons as trustees or guardians of the poor. That, too, was done by first calling together "the multitude of disciples" and submitting the matter to their consideration†. Ecclesiastical history also is very clear and explicit in the testimony which it bears to the fact of the popular election of the officers of the Church. The oldest witness on this subject is Clemens Romanus, who mentions that in his time no minister could be appointed without the consent of the Church. Cyprian likewise, the celebrated Bishop of Carthage, says, "*Nihil fiat nisi consentiente plebe,*"—Let nothing be done but

* Acts i. 15—26.

† Acts vi. 1—4.

by the consent of the people. Of himself he says, he was chosen by the suffrages of the people, “*populi suffragio.*” To the people he ascribes the right of choosing worthy bishops, or rejecting unworthy ones. He says, “*Plebs maximam habet potestatem, vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi.*”

Hilary, who wrote a commentary on the Epistles of Paul in the fourth century, says, “Among all people age is honoured, and hence the synagogues and afterwards the Church had elders, without whose counsel nothing was undertaken in the Church. I know not by what neglect this has become obsolete, unless it be by the pride of the teachers who fancy that they alone are of any consequence*.”

There are many instances “in which the people of their own accord and by acclamation elected individuals to the office of presbyter or bishop†.”

Sir Peter King observes, that when the bishop of a church was dead, all the people of that church met together in one place to choose a new bishop‡.

There can be no need, on such a point, of multiplying authorities, but I cannot forbear mentioning

* See Neander's Church History, vol. i. p. 206.

† Riddle's Christian Antiquities, p. 283.

‡ Constitution of the Primitive Church, p. 25.

two others whose judgement, for various reasons, is entitled to great weight. Waddington, in his 'History of the Church*', states, "that of most of the apostolical churches, the first bishops, where they are recorded to have been at all appointed, were appointed by the apostles; of those not apostolical, the first presidents were probably the missionaries who founded them; but on their death the choice of a successor devolved on the members of the society. In this election the people had an equal share with the presbyters and inferior clergy, without exception or distinction." And Dr. Arnold says that it appears to be the decisive language of Scripture, "that the whole body of the Church was to take an active share in its concerns. It was to be a living society, not an inert mass of mere hearers and subjects, who were to be authoritatively taught and absolutely ruled by one small portion of its members†."

But we are told that the election of any one to the ministerial office by the people is not enough to constitute such a person a lawful minister of Christ. To give it the proper sanction and validity the rite of ordination must be added, and more than this, that it must be administered by the hands of bishops lineally descended from the

* Vol. i. p. 40.

† Sermons on the Christian Life, Introd. p. 48.

apostles. Upon no one point, perhaps, has so much misapprehension prevailed as upon this article of ordination. It becomes us then to inquire into its origin and intention. What is it? What is its purpose and signification? When we have made this inquiry you will probably be surprised to find, that so far from there being any scriptural ground for asserting that *ordination* to be of any efficacy or validity must proceed from the hands of bishops (as we now understand the word bishop), it is itself a rite not limited, not peculiar to the ministerial office,—is not essential to the discharge of its functions, and is in the New Testament declared, in some instances at least, to have been administered by presbyters or elders.

What then is ordination? I answer, nothing more than a solemn public recognition of the ministerial character of the person previously elected, agreeably to the custom of the Jews in their synagogues, who, on the appointment of any one to the discharge of certain religious duties, marked this appointment by the ceremony called ordination. The imposition of hands with which it was accompanied was not exclusively employed upon this occasion: it was a common practice whenever, on the occurrence of any interesting or important event, the divine blessing was invoked. Thus we read that Jacob, in blessing the two sons of Joseph,

laid his hands upon their heads. When the prophets prayed for the restoration of health to the sick, they laid their hands on them. So Moses, when Joshua was appointed his successor, laid his hands on him. And we must all remember the observance of this form by our Lord himself, who, when little children were brought to him, laid his hands upon them and blessed them.

Out of this rite, so natural in its origin, so simple in its meaning, so beautiful and impressive in its application, what mysterious and extravagant notions of its virtue and efficacy have been drawn !

Palmer in his work on the Church calls ordination a sacrament ; and Keble, another of the Tractarian divines, advocates the literal meaning of the words “ receive the Holy Ghost,” which are used in the ordination service of the Church of England. He labours to prove that it is the doctrine of that church, that with the imposition of episcopal hands the Holy Ghost is really communicated to the person on whom they are laid. He quotes and justifies the following language : “ ‘ Receive the Holy Ghost : whose sins soever ye remit, they are remitted ; whose sins ye retain, they are retained.’ Seeing, therefore, *that the same power is now given*, why should the same form of words expressing it be thought foolish ? When we take ordination we also receive the presence of the Holy

Ghost, partly to guide, direct and strengthen us in all our ways, and partly to assume unto itself, for the more authority, those actions that appertain to our place and calling. Whether we preach, pray, baptize, communicate, condemn, give absolution, or whatever, as disposers of God's mysteries; our words, judgements, acts and deeds are not ours but the Holy Ghost's*."

Now if the primitive idea of ordination had been retained, such monstrous notions as these would never have been connected with it. In its original use, the imposition of hands was simply the oriental form of giving or asking a blessing. To ordain a man was nothing but a solemn form of introducing him into an office of which he was already in possession. Of its being the means or instrument of conveying to him any special authority, any extraordinary powers, not the remotest intimation in Scripture is anywhere given.

But this ceremony of the laying on of hands was not confined, was not peculiar to the pastoral or ministerial office. When spiritual gifts were communicated to Christians in general it was sometimes accompanied with the imposition of hands. Thus we read in the book of Acts, that "when the apostles, who were at Jerusalem, heard that the people of Samaria had received the word of God,

* Keble on Tradition, pp. 102, 103, 4th ed.

they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (which as yet had not fallen upon any of them). Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit*.”

Observe also that this ceremony was not only not confined, not peculiar to the ministerial office, but that the ministerial office itself was sometimes undertaken without it. Even the apostles (with the exception of Paul) never, that we are informed, received ordination by the imposition of hands. And when Matthias was chosen to the apostleship, vacant by the death of Judas, no mention is made of the observance of this form. His election was his ordination.

To complete my answer to the high-church views of this rite I will add, that the ceremony of ordination, such as it was, instead of being performed only by a peculiar order in the ministry, by those exclusively termed bishops, was administered by any officers of regular standing in the Church. We read that Paul and Barnabas were ordained by the hands of three brethren of the Church at Antioch†. And Paul writes in his letter to Timothy, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was

* Acts viii. 14—18. See also chap. xix. 6.

† Acts xiii. 1.

given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery*.” When, therefore, it is asserted that ordination, to be valid, must be performed by bishops only, by those who are denominated the first order in the Church, the assertion is made in direct opposition to what is recorded of the ordination of Timothy, and to the fact that Paul and Barnabas, themselves the first officers in the Church, the highest in order and rank (if there be any difference of rank), submitted to be ordained by those who were confessedly below them in office and authority, and who could not possibly be considered as occupying a higher station than that of presbyters or elders.

Ordination then is obviously a ceremony of mere investiture, founded on Jewish usage, and designed to designate the individual chosen or appointed for the performance of certain duties.

This is the view taken of it by many of the early reformers and divines both of the English and Scotch Church. Wickliff did not believe in the absolute necessity of ordination. Dr. M'Crie, in his ‘Life of Knox,’ says, that he not only denied the necessity of episcopal ordination, but that he did not even regard the imposition of the hands of presbyters as a rite of necessary observance. Archbishop Cranmer says, “In the New Testament he that is ap-

* 1 Tim. iv. 14.

pointed to be a bishop or a priest needeth no consecration by the Scripture, for election or appointing thereunto is sufficient*.” “The imposition of hands on the minister,” says Selden in his ‘Table Talk,’ “when all is done, will be nothing but a designation of a person to this or that office, or employment in the Church. ’Tis a ridiculous phrase, that of the canonists, *conferre ordines*.” And yet, notwithstanding all the evidence that has now been produced both from Scripture and other sources in behalf of the original identity of bishops and presbyters, and that ordination by the latter has the express sanction of Scripture, we are told by Mr. Palmer that the imposition of the hands of a prelate is essential to the validity of the ministry, and by the Bishop of London that in the early ages “it was never even thought of that there could be a church without a bishop”!!

In bringing these observations to a conclusion I beg you to take notice that I have not now been contending for the divine institution, or the absolute necessity of any one particular form of church government. No such form, I think, was given by Christ or his apostles as perpetually binding upon

* See Stillingfleet’s *Irenicum*, p. 392, ed. 1662. The document from which these words of Cranmer are taken is given entire in Burnet’s *History of the Reformation*.

all Christians of all time. The whole, as it appears to me (and as it has appeared to some of the soundest divines of all ages and churches), is a matter to be determined by considerations of fitness and expediency. Whether the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Independent, or any other mode of church government be the best, is a fair subject for discussion and inquiry. What I have been most desirous of now is, that you should know and understand how entirely groundless are the preposterous claims and pretensions lately set up by the high-church party in behalf of modern episcopacy.

The propositions which I believe to have been established in this lecture are these :—1st, That the Church is the congregation ; that it always bears this sense in the writings of the New Testament and of the most ancient Christians, except when it is used to designate the whole community of believers. This is the only exception. The term when not so used was always employed to signify a congregation of Christian worshippers meeting together in one place. 2nd, That there is no foundation in Scripture for the assertion that Christ or his apostles instituted a ministry consisting of three orders, and that to the first of these orders alone belongs the right of ordaining to the ministerial office. 3rd, That the episcopal form of govern-

ment, in its present shape, had no existence in the first Christian churches, and that the whole system of prelacy is a mere human contrivance, devoid of all scriptural authority, and supported only by strained analogies and gratuitous assumptions.

If these things be so, it follows that the very foundation on which the system of prelacy, as advocated by the Oxford divines, is built, is swept away. The first position taken up by them is altogether untenable. The very ground on which they stand is cut from under their feet. The clergy are not the Church ; their voice is not the voice of the Church ; their election is not the election of the Church ; and prelatical ordination has no more claim to be considered true and valid than the ordination proceeding from presbyters or elders. Having, as I conceive, proved all this, I might dismiss, as altogether needless, any further inquiry into the system of Puseyism, since, the foundation being destroyed, the superstructure raised upon it must fall to the ground. But that no argument may remain unanswered, I shall next proceed to show that, independently of the foregoing considerations, the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, as advanced by the Oxford divines, rests upon a basis as hollow and insecure as any other part of their system.

LECTURE III.

HAVING first given an account, derived chiefly from their own writings, of the principles advocated by the Oxford divines, my last lecture was taken up with an examination of the original nature and constitution of a Christian church, the functions and qualifications of its first ministers, the mode of their appointment, and the duties which they had to discharge. From this I think it was made to appear that the very basis of the system now under examination was most unsound, that the assumptions with which the high-church party set out are altogether wide of the truth, and that from first to last, from the very nature of a Christian church to the office and character of its ministers, there is scarcely a proposition advanced by them which is not founded in error and delusion. Of the Tractarian theology we may say generally, that false principles, false statements, false reasoning, and false inferences are among its marked and distinguishing characteristics. After having bestowed upon it much attention, I have been brought to the con-

viction that never before was there put forward a theory,—carrying with it such lofty pretensions and pregnant with such momentous consequences,—so utterly wanting in everything like evidence, so entirely resting upon far-fetched inferences, subtle distinctions, and unauthorized assumptions.

It is not because I attach any great importance to the question of church government, abstractedly considered, that I have entered upon the present inquiry ; it is because of the arrogance, the intolerance, the spiritual usurpation, the priestly domination which cleave to this revived Laudian school that I so strenuously resist and oppose it, and call upon you, if I can carry conviction to your minds of its antichristian spirit and tendency, to do the same. When we think of what is demanded by those who call themselves the successors of the apostles ; when we think of the power which some of them have thereby been enabled to build up for themselves ; when we call to mind all the dreadful evils of which ecclesiastical tyranny has at various times been the occasion ; it will be admitted, I believe, that hardly any question can present features of greater importance to the dignity and freedom of the human mind than the one we are now considering. If the nature and constitution of a Christian church had been rightly understood ; if Christians generally had been duly sensible of what

belonged to the office and character of apostles, and the essential difference between their functions and those of the ministers or pastors who succeeded them ; if they had been fully aware of the real object and purpose of all ecclesiastical rules and regulations, it would have been impossible for them to have submitted to the spiritual despotism which afterwards prevailed,—it would have been impossible for them to have been deluded by that miserable sophistry of which they too frequently became the wretched victims. The utility then of the inquiry in which we are now engaged consists in this, that we shall thereby be better enabled to detect and expose the vanity and folly of those proud and lofty pretensions set forth by the Puseyite party. When they say to us, and to all who do not adopt their views of church polity, you are without an authorized ministry ; your teachers are not rightfully appointed ; they are mere intruders into the holy office ; the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we ; our answer is, you are playing the part of spiritual despots ; you are aiming at the possession of that to which you have no exclusive title ; and though, in words, you may renounce the pope, you do, in fact, to adopt the language of Milton, still hug the popedom.

What then is the meaning of this doctrine of apostolic succession of which we hear so much ?

What does it say of the bishops, the clergy, on the one hand ; and what of the people, the laity, on the other ? That I may not be thought to misrepresent or caricature the doctrine, I will give a statement of it in words selected from the writings of those who are ranked among its leading advocates and supporters.

In the first number of 'Tracts for the times' the doctrine of apostolic succession is thus laid down : "The Lord Jesus gave his Spirit to his apostles ; they in turn laid their hands on those who succeeded them ; these on others ; and so the sacred gift has been handed down to our present bishops." The following passage looks almost as if it were intended to burlesque the doctrine, but the quarter from which it comes is a sufficient assurance that it is written in sober earnestness. It is contained in the tenth number of the Tracts. "The apostles did not leave the world without appointing persons to take their place ; and these persons represent them, and may be considered, with reference to us, as if they were apostles. When a man dies, his son takes his property and represents him ; that is, in a manner, he still lives in the person of his son. Well, this explains how the apostles may be said to be still among us. They did not indeed leave their sons to succeed them as apostles, but they left spiritual sons. But it may be asked, are these

spiritual sons of the apostles still alive? No ; all this took place many hundred years ago. These sons and heirs of the apostles died long since. But then they in turn did not leave the world without committing their sacred office to a fresh set of ministers, and they in turn to another, and so on even to this day. Thus the apostles had first spiritual sons ; then spiritual grandsons ; then great grandsons ; and so on, from one age to another, down to the present time."

Such then is what is called the doctrine of apostolic succession ; and it amounts to this :—there is an order of ministers in the Christian Church distinct from and superior to presbyters, to whom is exclusively appropriated the title of bishops. These hold their office by divine right, and not by human appointment. With them alone is lodged the authority, the right to ordain ; and without such ordination no one can lawfully take upon himself the administration of Christian ordinances, or safely engage in the work of the Christian ministry. The two doctrines, says Dr. Arnold, which are the foundation of the whole system are these : " God's grace and our salvation come to us principally through the virtue of the sacraments, and the virtue of the sacraments depends on the apostolical succession of those who administer them. The clergy, therefore, thus holding in their hands the

most precious gifts of the Church, acquire naturally the title of the Church itself*.”

Now suppose that the bishops of the Anglo-Catholic Church could make good the fact of their lineal descent from the apostles, I say that that alone would go no way to establish their right to the extraordinary powers and privileges which are claimed for them. Whether they can or cannot do this will be the subject of our immediate inquiry ; but admitting that they can, nothing in favour of their doctrine follows from it. They must prove that with their lineal descent have also descended to them the power and authority of the apostles. There is no necessary connection between the one and the other. It is not sufficient to say so ; evidence must be brought to prove it. And what kind of evidence must that be ? I answer, nothing less than the clear, direct, positive, unambiguous declarations of Scripture. Before they attempt to establish the fact of their apostolic descent, they must first show that such a fact, if proved, is of any avail towards settling the point in question. This is the first thing to be done. They are not to say, see how, link by link, we can run along the chain which connects us with the apostles, and how clearly, therefore, we establish our claim to apostolic authority. No, I reply, you

* Christian Life, Introd. p. 16.

must first show that there is any scriptural ground for supposing that, even if you could make good this so-called apostolic descent, you are therefore entitled to appropriate to yourselves apostolic powers and privileges. On the contrary, the advancement of such a claim,—considering what it is and what it implies,—demands the production of the most unquestioned and unquestionable title before it can be seriously attended to. In such a case and for such a purpose, the evidence must not be indirect and inferential merely, but direct and indisputable. If such evidence be not forthcoming, the claim set up deserves to be covered with scorn and contempt.

When any body of men assume to themselves exclusive rights and privileges, when they assert that they alone constitute the one true Church of Christ, and then go on to pronounce a sentence of withering anathema upon all other denominations calling themselves Christian, it is natural and reasonable to say to them, show us your title,—produce your credentials,—give us for these supernatural claims the requisite supernatural proof. If they cannot do this ; if they have no such demonstration to offer of their high spiritual commission, then the only other witness to which they can appeal is that borne by some clear, certain, positive assurance of Scripture. Let us see then whether any such assurance is there given.

In the promise which Christ made to his apostles in these words, "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world," we have, it is said, the very proof required. How so, we ask? What is there in these expressions to warrant the interpretation put upon them by the divines of the Oxford school? That interpretation supposes that our Lord, besides the promise which he gave of being present with his apostles, promised also to be with their episcopally-ordained successors, and them only, to the end of the world. Now, in the first place, what ground is there for applying these words to any except the apostles; and, in the next place, if their application is to be carried beyond the apostles, what reason is there for limiting it to those only who have received regular episcopal ordination? One's visual organs must be possessed of extraordinary microscopic power to perceive the identity between these two forms of expression, "I will be with you, my apostles, to the end of time," and, "I will be with you, and after you, with your prelatically-ordained successors only, through all ages." If these two assurances are not identical, what right has any one to say that the first does nevertheless imply the second? The truth is, there is nothing to show that these words have relation to any persons but the apostles: they are addressed to them and to them only. But suppose

that they are not to be thus limited, and that they were intended to embrace others besides the apostles, what reason is there for saying that those others include only episcopally-ordained ministers? Such a construction of Christ's language is, I venture to say, one of the most arbitrary and unjust that was ever attempted to be palmed upon a passage. I might further allege that the word rendered 'world' should be translated 'age*,' which would be an additional reason for believing that Christ's promise was made more particularly and expressly to his apostles and immediate disciples. But whether this translation be allowed or not, it does not signify one jot or tittle as to the question before us; for, take the words exactly as they are in our common version, and it appears to me to be utterly impossible to screw out of them the Tractarian interpretation. Look at them, I say, with an eye of the keenest inquisition, and see whether anything in the shape of such a construction lies hidden within them. I think that any impartial, unbiassed man might gaze at them till

* This is the translation of the Greek original according to Archbishop Newcome, Bishop Pearce, Wakefield and others. In that case the meaning of the passage would be, that Christ promised to be present, in a peculiar manner, with his apostles to the end of the age, that is, of the Jewish economy; after which miraculous powers were withdrawn and Christ no more appeared personally to his apostles.

doomsday, and still be at a loss to perceive the faintest impression of such a meaning. Indeed I feel it to be almost an abuse of your time to ask your attention to such childish reasoning as is sometimes founded upon passages like the foregoing. And I would not have done it now, had it not been necessary for the purpose of showing you what sort of arguments are made use of on behalf of high-church principles,—how poor, and weak, and flimsy they, for the most part, are. In truth they often present so little of the appearance of argument that one hardly knows how to grapple with them. If they had a little more substance about them we could more easily lay hold of them, and handle them; but as it is, they are so shadowy and shapeless, that they seem, when we endeavour to approach them, to melt away and vanish into “thin air.”

An argument in favour of the high and exclusive claims of modern prelacy is often drawn from a supposed analogy between the Jewish and what is termed the Christian priesthood. My answer to this is, that so far from there being any similarity between the Christian ministry and the Jewish priesthood, there is, on the contrary, an entire and essential difference between them. As institutions, there is no parallel to be drawn between the Mosaic and the Christian systems. The one is “a law of commandments contained in ordinances,”

and is a “ministration of the letter ;” the other is a revelation of principles, and is a “ministration of the spirit.” In the one, everything is minutely laid down and strictly defined ; in the other, all is open, general, broad, comprehensive. “See,” says God to Moses, “that thou make all things according to the pattern shown to thee in the mount.” Where is anything like this addressed to Christ or his apostles ? “The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ.”

In Scripture the priests, both Jewish and pagan, bear the name, not of presbyter (since contracted into the word priest), but of *Hiereus**. This is the Greek term always made use of to denote Jewish and heathen priests ; but is never, in the Scriptures, applied to Christian ministers. These are called ‘presbyteros’ or ‘episcopos,’ elders or overseers. No mention whatever is made of the establishment, under the gospel dispensation, of any office similar

* On the word Priest, Archbishop Whately, in the Appendix to his *Logic*, has this remark :—“Etymologically the word answers to presbyter, *i. e.* elder of the Christian Church. But it is remarkable that it never occurs in this sense in our translation of the Scriptures : the word *πρεσβύτερος* being always rendered by Elder ; and its derivative, priest, always given as the translation of *ιερεύς*. This latter is an office assigned to none under the gospel-scheme except the one great High Priest,.....who offered a sacrifice which is the only one under the Gospel.”—“It is incalculable,” he adds, “how much confusion has arisen from confounding together the two senses of the word Priest.”

to the Jewish priesthood. This, of itself, is a strong presumption that Christ and his apostles regarded the two functions, of the Christian pastor and the Jewish priest, as essentially distinct. And so it will appear more clearly still, if we consider the nature of the office exercised by Jewish and pagan priests. The Jewish priests were appointed for the express purpose of offering sacrifices in the name and on behalf of the people*. They alone were allowed to make oblations and burn incense to the Lord. They alone were to make intercession and atonement for transgressors. They alone were the mediators between God and men. It was the same among the pagans. With them also the priests were the offerers of sacrifice. They made supplication and atonement for the people. They were the mediators between the worshipper and the worshipped. But in the Christian Scriptures the office of priest (in the sense of the Greek word *Hiereus*) is ascribed to Christ, and to no one else; and for this reason, that he alone offered up the great sacrifice for human redemption; that he alone now liveth to make intercession; that through him alone we have access by one spirit unto the Father, and that he alone is the one Mediator between God and man.

* It should be borne in mind that the distinguishing office of a priest (*Hiereus*) properly so called, is to offer sacrifice.

As for the ministers appointed by our Lord or his apostles, they are altogether distinct from priests in office as well as in name. The duty of the Christian minister, as defined in the New Testament, was to preach the Gospel ; to instruct, admonish, and exhort. But the especial duty of the priest, as that word was in use among the Jews and pagans, was entirely of a different nature. Under the Jewish dispensation the instruction of the people belonged not so much to the family of Aaron (with whom alone the priesthood was lodged) as to the whole tribe of Levi ; nor even to them was this duty confined ; for we know that persons of any tribe might teach publicly on the sabbath-day. This was done by our Lord himself, who was of the tribe of Judah, and also by Paul, who was of the tribe of Benjamin*. No objection, on the part of the Jews, that

* This practice passed from the Synagogue into the early Christian Church. " All Christians," says Neander, " had the right to pour out their hearts before their brethren in the assemblies of the Church, and to speak for their edification." And Archbishop Whately justly observes, " that it should never be forgotten that Christianity is the offspring of Judaism, and that all the institutions and regulations of the Christian Church emanated from men who had been brought up as Jews, and who would not have deviated from what they had been used to, on slight grounds."—*Errors of Romanism*, p. 96 ; Neander's *Church History*, p. 188. That the rules and regulations of the first Christian churches were founded on the practice and usages of the Synagogue is largely shown in Stillingfleet's 'Irenicum.'

we read of, was ever made to their doing so. But had they intruded into the priest's office, strictly so termed, the intrusion would, no doubt, have been vehemently resented.

There is then no similarity between the Jewish priesthood and the Christian ministry. The argument, resting upon the supposed analogy between them, falls to the ground ; and not only so, but the want of this similarity, or, I should rather say, the entire difference between the two, shows that the one is not the type of the other, and that the Christian ministry, in the true sense and meaning of the phrase, is not a priesthood at all. The only sense in which it can be so considered is that in which it is applicable to Christians in general, who are styled by the apostle Peter a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people. "It is a common mistake," says Stillingfleet, "to think that the ministers of the Gospel succeed by way of correspondence and analogy to the priests under the law ; and this mistake has been the foundation and original of many errors."

Another argument drawn from Scripture in behalf of the doctrine of apostolic succession, and which is much relied on, is the address delivered by Christ to his apostles, as given in John xx. 23 : "Receive ye the Holy Spirit : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose

soever sins ye retain, they are retained." These words, you will observe, whatever be their meaning, are addressed directly and especially to the apostles, after having received from Christ the gift of the Holy Spirit. If we suppose that by the word "sins" is to be understood sins wilfully committed against God, known transgressions of the moral law, then the passage would authorize us in saying that Christ had conferred on the apostles authority to grant or refuse pardon to the guilty offender as to them should seem meet and right; but there is not a word to show that this authority was to extend to any others but the apostles. The commission is given to them, and to them only; and for the due performance of its duties, they receive from Christ miraculous powers;—are gifted with supernatural endowments. Such is the case as it lies literally and plainly before us. Archbishop Whately supposes that by the word "sins" in this passage, we are to understand not so much sins committed against God, as offences committed against the church or congregation,—transgressions of the rules and regulations of the community to which the parties belonged. He considers the passage as having very much the same signification as that in which Christ said to Peter and the apostles generally, that whatsoever they should bind and loose on earth should be bound and loosed in heaven; that

is, they were authorized to make such laws and regulations for the good government of the Christian Church, and to grant or refuse admission into it, as to them it appeared fitting and expedient ; conducive to the edification of its members, and the order and decorum of its proceedings. “ Language of this kind,” he says, “ was very common among the Jewish doctors, from whom our Lord probably borrowed it. They were in the habit of using the words, binding and loosing, in the sense of enacting and abrogating*.” Very much of the same signification attaches to the words, “ Whatsoever sins ye remit they are remitted, and whatsoever sins ye retain they are retained.” The apostles were entrusted with the duty of inflicting or remitting the penalties of church censure, and of checking such disorderly conduct in the members of the Christian community as threatened to

* “ Binding and loosing,” says Lightfoot, “ in our Saviour’s sense and in the Jews’ sense, from whose use he taketh the phrase, is of *things* and not of *persons* ; for Christ said to Peter, ‘ whatsoever’ thou bindest, and not ‘ whomsoever’ ; and to the other apostles (Matt. xviii. 18), ‘ whatsoever *things*,’ and not ‘ whatsoever *persons*.’ ” After giving, from Jewish writers, various instances of the use of the phrase “ to bind and to loose,” he concludes as follows :—“ 1. It is used in teaching and in judging regarding things lawful and things not lawful. 2. To bind is the same as to forbid or declare a thing forbidden ; to loose is to permit, or declare a thing permitted.”—*Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations on the Gospel of St. Matthew.*

disturb its peace and mar the purpose of its institution.

Whether this interpretation of the passage be just or otherwise is of no great moment to the question at issue. I have referred to it now in order to show the reasonable construction which has been put upon it by no less a scholar and divine than Archbishop Whately. But leaving this interpretation out of view, and allowing the apostles to have been literally and actually invested with the power of forgiving sins ; what then ? what follows ? How does this establish the claim of bishops and priests to the possession and exercise of the same power ? In the service of the English Church for the ordination of priests, the Bishop says to the party ordained, " Receive the Holy Ghost : whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven ; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." If this be not a sort of legal fiction, a sham, a pretence, tremendous indeed is the power which these imagined successors of the apostles assume to be in possession of. That by them it is intended to be understood according to the plain obvious meaning of the words ; that it is really and *bonâ fide* claimed for prelates and priests, is clear not only from the passage quoted in the last lecture from Keble's work on Tradition, but from the language used by the present Bishop of

Exeter in one of the charges delivered by him to his clergy. After citing these words of our Lord addressed to his apostles, he adds, "This was the awful authority given by Christ to his first ministers, and in them and through them to all their successors. This is the awful authority we have received, and which we must never be ashamed, nor afraid to tell the people that we have received*."

It is difficult to believe that such pretensions should be really and seriously advanced by any man in his right mind; but the fact is so, and being so, it must be met and answered. We ask, then,—admitting that the power of forgiving sins was literally conferred by Christ on his apostles,—what pretence is there for saying that it was intended to be conferred upon any minister of the Gospel who came after them, or upon those exclusively who had received episcopal ordination? Is there anything in the words made use of to justify such a conclusion? Is there anything that wears the faintest show or shadow of such an intention? Upon what ground, then, is the assumption built? Upon the ground, we are told, that the bishops, being the regularly ordained successors of the apostles, inherit the gifts, graces and endowments that were bestowed upon them. Like them they may

* Bishop of Exeter's Charge at his Triennial Visitation, 1836, p. 44.

be considered as the ambassadors of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God*.

I must here remind you that the apostles of Christ were chosen for a special and extraordinary purpose, and that for the execution of this purpose they were endowed with peculiar and extraordinary powers. But because in one department of their office, that is, as teachers of Christian truth, certain persons were chosen to succeed them, why should it be supposed that they also succeeded them in all other respects and relations? Why should they who followed the apostles simply as teachers or preachers of the Gospel, but who had not their peculiar duties to perform nor their extraordinary mission to fulfill, be thought to inherit powers and privileges peculiarly appertaining to the position in which the apostles were placed and the special functions which they had to discharge? It is of the very nature and essence of the apostolic office that it died with the apostles. It was not one which could be transmitted to others,—which could be handed down to any who came after them. It has been well remarked, “that the maxim of the canon law, that a personal privilege doth follow the

* “For many years we have been much in the habit of resting our claim on the general duties of submission to authority, of decency and order,—of respecting precedents long established, instead of appealing to that warrant which marks us, *exclusively*, for God’s ambassadors.”—*Tract* 4. p. 1.

person and is extinguished with the person, applies here most fully. The privilege of the apostles was purely personal. It rested on the fact that the men, Peter, James, Paul and the rest of them, had, with their own eyes, seen the Lord, and with their own ears heard his words, and in their own persons received authority from him to tell the world what they had heard and seen, as well as power to work miracles in attestation of the truth of their pretensions." Lightfoot, in his 'Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,' has a similar remark. He says, "The end of their election was peculiar, the like to which was not to be in the Church again,—for they were chosen to be with Christ; to be eye-witnesses of his resurrection, as they had been of his actions and passion. And, therefore, Paul, pleading for his apostleship, says that he had seen the Lord." It is clear, then, that neither prelates nor priests of any description are or can be the successors of the apostles in the proper and peculiar sense which that word bears. What right therefore have they to the inheritance of their name and character? Can they exhibit any proofs, or give any sensible demonstrations of their apostolic authority? Paul tells us what the tokens and evidences of the apostleship were:—"They are wrought among you," says he, "in signs and wonders and mighty deeds." Now where and what

are the wonders and mighty deeds that have been wrought by the hands of prelates? Show us, we say, these signs of an apostle, and we will allow you to boast of your apostolic powers and privileges. The Romanists, we know, do pretend to exhibit these signs. They say, that they are able to offer us these proofs of the apostolic character and authority of their bishops. We may think their pretensions to be unfounded and absurd; but they have, at least, the merit of consistency. We may refuse assent to the premises on which their reasoning is founded, but, granting their premises, their reasoning is sound and just. But to the Oxford high-church divines we say, your reasoning is essentially vicious. Without laying down the requisite data, you jump at once to the desired conclusion. You argue not only from false premises, but from premises that have no outward form or fashion. You do not offer to give us the signs of an apostle, and yet you arrogate to yourselves the authority of an apostle*. Not possessing then the proper credentials, not being able to produce

* That they do so is manifest from various passages contained in the Tracts. Take for example the following. Speaking of the bishops they say, "They stand in the place of the apostles as far as the office of ruling is concerned; and whatever we ought to do, had we lived when the apostles were alive, the same ought we to do for the bishops. He that despiseth them despiseth the apostles."—*Tract 10. p. 3.*

the requisite and appropriate title, your claims must be dismissed as altogether invalid and unworthy of attention.


That the powers bestowed on the apostles were, in many respects, enjoyed by them exclusively, and were never designed for those who should succeed them as Christian ministers or teachers, is the opinion of many learned divines of the Church of England itself. Among these may be reckoned Dr. Maltby, the present bishop of Durham. In showing what is meant by the Scripture phraseology of "binding and loosing," he says, "there is not the slightest suggestion that the power given to the whole body of the apostles was to pass down to their successors, or extend even to their contemporary associates in the government of the Christian Church*." On the other hand the Bishop of Exeter, as we have before seen, says, that this power *did* pass down to their successors, and that they of the episcopate have received it.

Here then we have bishop opposed to bishop, that is, (speaking in the language of the Tractarians) we have one successor of the apostles asserting that he has, another asserting that he has not, the same or the like authority that was granted to them. Can there be a greater exposure than this of the folly of all such pretensions? Here

* Maltby's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 462.

are two men, the Bishop of Exeter and the Bishop of Durham, each distinguished in his respective walk, the one as a learned and accomplished divine, the other as an able and acute disputant, and both of them endowed, as we are told, with the gift of the Holy Spirit and with the power of imparting it to others,—here are these two regularly ordained successors of the apostles directly pitted one against the other in the interpretation of those very texts which relate especially to the nature and qualifications of their own office. The Bishop of Exeter says, the true construction of them is, that we (prelates and priests) have the same authority given to us that was given to the apostles. The Bishop of Durham says, no, they signify nothing of the kind. They contain not the slightest intimation that any such power was to pass down from them to their successors. Such a difference as this, upon the particular point before us, is alone decisive of the whole question: it proves at once the utter fallacy and futility of the Puseyite or high-church principles now under consideration.

The fact is, that the divines of the Oxford school are well aware of the total deficiency of scriptural evidence under which their system labours. They know that from this quarter little or no help can be obtained; and to parry the force of any objection which on this account might be brought against



them, they endeavour to enlist on their side the orthodox feelings and prejudices of the people with respect to what are thought to be the essential doctrines of Christianity, well knowing that if they can fortify themselves with such an armour as this, and identify their cause with the popular creed, so as to make it appear that they have common interests, that they both rest on the same basis, and must stand or fall together,—if they can do this, they think that they have erected for themselves a barrier which it will not be easy to surmount. In answer, then, to the objection, your system is wanting in scriptural support,—it has no foundation in the New Testament,—there is no countenance given to it in the language of Christ or his apostles,—they say, it may be so, but this is a matter of no consequence ; for, see, the doctrine of the Trinity is not taught there ; the doctrine of original sin is not taught there ; the doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit is not taught there ;—and yet who, for this reason, would dare to call them in question ? And why then, for the same reason, would you call in question the doctrine of apostolic succession ? If you reject this because you cannot find it in Scripture, you must, to be consistent, reject some of the great essential doctrines of Christianity, and become Socinians or Unitarians. At the mention of these words the people instantly

take alarm ; and shrinking from the very apprehension of falling into the gulf of so dreadful a heresy, they are ready to admit anything, to believe anything, rather than take a step which might possibly lead to so dire a result. In justification of what I have now said, it will be proper for me to give you their own words.

“ Where,” say they, “ is this solemn and comfortable mystery (the doctrine of the Trinity) formally stated in Scripture, as we find it in the creeds ? Why is it not ? Let a man consider whether all the objections which are urged against the Scripture argument for episcopacy may not be turned against his own belief in the Trinity.”
“ If the words altar, absolution, or succession are not in Scripture, neither is the word Trinity.”

“ A person who denies the apostolical succession of the ministry, because it is not clearly taught in Scripture, ought, if consistent, to deny the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, which is nowhere literally stated in Scripture.”

“ Consider whether the doctrine of the Atonement may not be explained away by those who explain away the doctrine of the Eucharist : if the expressions used concerning the latter are merely figurative, so may be those of the former.”

“ On how many texts does the doctrine of original sin rest ? On one or two. How do we prove

the doctrine of justification by faith only? It is nowhere declared in Scripture."

"The three first gospels contain no declaration of our Lord's divinity, and there are passages which tend at first sight the other way. . . . Is it possible that the Evangelists could write any one particle of their records of his life without having the great and solemn truth steadfastly before them, that he was their God? Yet they do not show this. It follows that truths may be in the mind of the inspired writers which are not discoverable to ordinary readers in the tone of their composition. . . . I conceive the impression left on an ordinary mind would be, that our Saviour was a superhuman being, intimately possessed of God's confidence, but still a creature; an impression infinitely removed from the truth as really contained and intended in those gospels."

All these passages may be found in the forty-fifth and eighty-fifth numbers of the 'Tracts for the times.'

To these I will subjoin one other quotation from the Lecture-sermons of the Rev. W. J. E. Bennett, a clergyman nominated, it is said, by the Bishop of London to one of the largest churches in his diocese. I give it as it appeared in the *Record* newspaper of July the 6th:—

"If we are satisfied that Scripture is Scripture—

that is, that our Bibles, as we possess them now, do contain God's real word,—if in this we are satisfied, then let me mark out to you a few things which I do not think you could, or any Christian could, have found out for himself in that Bible,—things which I do not imagine would have been articles of our faith so peremptorily pronounced as they are, had there not been such a thing as tradition, or the teaching of the Church ; for instance, *the doctrine of the Holy Trinity*. Is it possible, my brethren, do you think, that you, or I, or any one, be he ever so gifted with the powers of man, could have deduced and invented for himself this most wonderful and mysterious doctrine out of the Bible ? There is no mention of the Trinity in unity to be found in Scripture in so many direct words. That God is one and yet three, three and yet one, is not said, in so many distinct words, in the Bible ; and yet it is a most vital doctrine. We have always had it in the Church*.”

I might produce other passages from the writings

* Mr. Newman argues in the same manner. According to him it is no sufficient ground of objection to a doctrine that it is not clearly expressed in Scripture. He says, “What is to hinder the multitude of men who have been allowed to reject the doctrine of Transubstantiation because they do not find it in Scripture, from rejecting also the divinity of the Holy Ghost because he is nowhere plainly called God ?”—*Lectures on Romanism and Popular Protestantism*, p. 181.

of the Oxford divines to the same effect ; but these are amply sufficient to show that they themselves are perfectly aware of the weakness of their cause, as far at least as it rests on the foundation of Scripture. Their stronghold, they allege, is in the testimony of antiquity : they can prove, by the records of history, the fact of their apostolic descent. Upon that fact they build, and, as I shall immediately proceed to show, they build in vain. For, in the first place, the fact itself cannot be established ; and, in the next place, if it could, it would not weigh an atom in favour of their system.

It is asserted, then, by the advocates of Apostolic Succession, that every episcopally-ordained clergyman can trace up his spiritual lineage to the apostles, through a line of prelates who personally succeeded them ; and that in this long line there is not a single link wanting, or that is not sound and perfect. As to the fact of the apostolic succession, says one of the Tractarians, that is, “ that our present bishops are the heirs and representatives of the apostles by successive transmission of the privilege of being so, this is too notorious to require proof. Every link in the chain is known from St. Peter to our present metropolitans*.” Dr. Hook says the same. According to him “ there is not a bishop, priest, or deacon who may not, if he please, trace his spiritual descent from St. Peter or St. Paul.”

* Tracts for the Times, No. 7. p. 2.

Upon this I will first observe, that if, in this vaunted chain of apostolic succession, there be found only one link that is broken or any way defective, doubt and suspicion are instantly thrown upon every part of the whole line. Let us see, then, what the fact is in regard to the very beginning of the succession—the age immediately following that of the apostles. Considering the positive manner in which it is asserted of certain persons or bishops, that they immediately succeeded or were ordained by one of the apostles, many of you will probably be much surprised when I tell you that even here, with respect to this very first link in the chain, all is uncertainty and conjecture. Bold and confident assertions are easily made, and many are as easily deceived by them; but there are those who care little for such kind of statements, and before they yield the assent demanded require something to be produced in the shape of proof. Many of the high-church advocates draw very largely upon the ignorance and credulity of their readers; but they may sometimes overstep the mark—presume a little too much; and this, I think, will be found to be the case here. What, I ask, is the proof of the apostolic succession as commencing with St. Peter at Rome, and coming down to existing prelates? So far from the proof being clear and satisfactory, I will show you that

the chain on which this doctrine of the succession hangs is defective at the very commencement,—at the point where it ought to have been the firmest and strongest.

It is generally supposed that the first bishop after St. Peter was Linus, and that he was succeeded by Cletus and Clement. This agrees with the account given by Irenæus; but Tertullian places Clement first, and so do several others of the Christian fathers. Then come Jerome and Augustine with a different statement. They say that Cletus and Linus were before Clement. Eusebius relates that, after the death of St. Peter and St. Paul, Linus was the first bishop of Rome, and that after him came Anacletus and then Clement. Now if Linus did not become bishop till after the death of the apostles, how can it be said that he was made bishop by the apostles? And what then becomes of the succession? It terminates in Linus, and not in the apostles. From this very brief summary of the opinions of the early fathers, you will perceive the utter and inextricable confusion in which the first links of this alleged chain of apostolic descent are involved. Nothing can be more uncertain than the order of the succession from the first. “It is,” says Stillingfleet, “as muddy as the Tiber itself; for here Tertullian and Rufinus, and several others, place Clement next to Peter; Irenæus and Euse-

bis set Anacletus before him ; Epiphanius and Optatus both Anacletus and Cletus ; Augustine and Damasus, with others, Anacletus, Cletus and Linus all to precede him. What way shall we find to extricate ourselves out of this labyrinth * ? ” That the apostle Peter was ever at Rome at all is a question on which learned men have entertained different opinions. That he was what is called bishop of Rome is a position still more doubtful and uncertain. On this point the ever-memorable John Hales thus expresses himself : “ That St. Peter was bishop at all (as now the name of bishop is taken) may be very questionable ; for the ancients that reckon up the bishops of Rome until their times, as Eusebius and before him Tertullian, and before them both Irenæus, never account Peter as bishop of that see ; and Epiphanius tells us that Peter and Paul were both bishops of Rome at once, by which it is plain that he took the title of bishop in another sense than now it is used ; for now, and so for a long time upward, two bishops can no more possess one see than two hedge-sparrows can dwell in one bush † . ”

It thus appears that the prime question on which the whole cause rests,—the very corner-stone and foundation on which the proud structure of prelacy

* Stillingfleet’s *Irenicum*, p. 322, ed. 1662.

† Hales’s *Tracts*, p. 206, ed. 1721.

is built, is involved in the greatest uncertainty,—in the most impenetrable obscurity. Mr. Riddle, an able and learned clergyman, to whose excellent work on ‘Christian Antiquities’ I have before referred, observes in his preface to that work, “It is impossible to prove the personal succession of modern bishops, in an unbroken episcopal line from the apostles, or men of the apostolic age. As a matter of history and fact, apostolic succession, in this acceptance of the term, is an absolute non-entity. Call it a theory, a fiction, a vision, or whatever you choose, you cannot give it a name too shadowy and unsubstantial. It exists, indeed, as an honest prejudice in the minds of many sincere Christians, and so far it is entitled to consideration and respect; but in itself it is an empty sound*.”

The difficulties, the improbabilities, I had almost said the impossibilities, attending this doctrine of Apostolic Succession cannot be better stated than in the words of two eminent writers of the present day; the one, a dignitary of the highest order in the English Church and a distinguished ornament of that Church; the other, a layman no less remarkable for the extent of his acquirements and the vigour of his understanding. I refer, in the first instance, to Archbishop Whately. He says, in his

* Christian Antiquities, Preface, p. 73.

work on the ' Kingdom of Christ,' "There is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up, with any approach to certainty, his own spiritual pedigree. During the dark ages, irregularities could not have been wholly excluded without a perpetual miracle. We read of bishops consecrated when mere children ; of men officiating who barely knew their letters ; of profligate laymen and habitual drunkards admitted to holy orders ; in short, of the prevalence of every kind of disorder*." Mr. Macaulay, the other author to whom I alluded, says, "The transmission of orders from the apostles to an English clergyman of the present day must have been through a very great number of intermediate persons. Now it is probable that no clergyman can trace up his spiritual genealogy from bishop to bishop so far back as the time of the Conquest. There remain many centuries during which the history of the transmission of his orders is buried in utter darkness. . . . Extreme obscurity overhangs the history of the middle ages ; and the facts which are discernible through that obscurity prove that the Church was exceedingly ill regulated. We read of sees of the highest dignity openly sold ; transferred backward and forward by popular tumult, and sometimes bestowed by a warlike baron on a kinsman who

* Whately's Kingdom of Christ, pp. 176, 177.

was a mere stripling. We read of bishops of ten years old ; of bishops of five years old ; of popes who were mere boys. We are at a loss, therefore, to conceive how any clergyman can feel confident that his orders have come down correctly*.”

After what has now been said respecting this imagined apostolic succession ; after showing that there is no foundation for it in Scripture, and that, as a matter of history, the fact itself of such a succession is involved in the greatest obscurity and uncertainty, it would seem useless to add another word in refutation of a system so unreasonable, so unscriptural, so intrinsically improbable, and so totally devoid of everything in the shape of evidence to sustain it. That there are any persons seriously to advocate this doctrine would be to me, I confess, a matter of unutterable astonishment, did I not know that there is nothing, however foolish and extravagant,—however contrary to reason and common sense and the plain instructions of Scripture, but will meet with its abettors and supporters. Before bringing this lecture to a conclusion, there are one or two other points which I am desirous of submitting to your attentive consideration.

In the first place let me request you to observe, that the claims set up by the churches of England and Rome were also set up in times past by churches

* Macaulay's Essays, vol. ii. p. 480.

now branded with the name of heresy. This was the case with the Arian churches. These churches, it is well known, once prevailed to a considerable extent, and through many countries. As to their ecclesiastical constitution or form of government they were episcopal, and had as fair a claim to the apostolic succession as any churches then in existence. But the orthodox party, in spite of this claim,—in defiance of the apostolic title possessed by their bishops,—denounced them in the fiercest terms of condemnation. In the East the Greek church also, which is at variance on points of faith with the Western churches, has quite as good a claim as they have to the grace of “the apostolic succession.” But this avails nothing with the orthodox believers. With them it forms of itself no bond of fellowship and union,—presents no barrier to rejection and exclusion from the true Catholic Church of Christ. The Nestorian, the Eutychian and other churches, all condemned by councils as heretical, present exactly the same title to the possession of apostolic orders. So that, according to the showing of these high-church divines themselves, the simple fact of apostolic succession does not, on that account, imply the inheritance of apostolic endowments. For what reason then, I ask, is the fact so earnestly insisted on, and so ostentatiously exhibited? It seems after all that there may be apo-

stolic succession unaccompanied with apostolic gifts and graces. But if the possession of apostolic orders be no security against the inroads of error and no safeguard for the preservation of the truth, it ceases any longer to be a mark or sign of the true Church. Or, we may state the matter thus. On what ground can one church say to another church possessing the same apostolic commission, we are certainly right, and you are as certainly wrong? I thought that the very object and design, the use and importance of these supposed apostolical orders, was to constitute the possessors of them "the hereditary witnesses of the truth*." But if, instead of being witnesses of the truth, they become witnesses of grievous and damnable errors, wherein lies the value, the efficacy of these "orders"?

In the next place, the Oxford divines claim for the episcopal Church of England,—notwithstanding her separation from the Church of Rome, and that the apostolic succession of her prelates is confessedly drawn through this channel,—they claim for the Church of England, in her state of division and

* "The treasure of sound doctrine," says Mr. Keble, "is guarded by the grace of the apostolical succession."—*Tradition*, p. 42. If so, then it follows that the Arian as well as the Athanasian clergy of former days, the Greek and Romish as well as the Anglo-Catholic doctors of the present day, are all the guardians of sound doctrine, for they all alike boast of possessing the apostolic succession.

alienation from the mother church*, the title and character of the true Church of Christ. And what says the apostolically-descended Church of Rome to this, that church which is acknowledged, by her rebellious daughter, to enjoy “the succession” with the most assured certainty and in the fullest degree? Why she says that the claim is altogether unfounded and invalid; that the clergy of the English Church, by separating from her communion, have destroyed the only links which connected them with the apostles,—have cut themselves off from the very channel by which alone the apostolic grace or virtue could be conveyed to them. She says that the Church of England is an apostate church—that she is guilty of the sin of schism—that she is no longer in communion with the genuine Catholic Church, and cannot administer, with safety and efficacy, the Christian sacraments and ordinances. I have before spoken of bishops in the same church being opposed to one another respecting this very doctrine of Apostolic Succession; and here we have two churches, both of them professing to have the signs and characteristics of belonging to the true Church of Christ—both of them asserting their claim to the apostolic succession, and yet existing in a state of separation and

* “Is it a duty to forget that Rome was our mother, through whom we were born to Christ?”—*Tracts for the Times*, No. 77. p. 33.


estrangement from one another, and having no intercommunion or fellowship among their respective members. Nor is this all; for the Church (viz. of Rome) admitted by the other (the English Church) to be in legitimate possession of the genuine apostolic title, denies to that other that she has any such title to exhibit. The Church of Rome excommunicates and anathematizes the Church of England as schismatical in its profession and heretical in its doctrine*.

Hence we see that the claim to apostolic succession proves nothing as to the identity of the church, so claiming it, with the true Church of Christ. We may observe various ecclesiastical bodies, with very different forms, ordinances, ceremonies and doctrines, regarding each other as heretical and schismatical, and yet all asserting that they inherit this pure, unadulterated, apostolic succession. But how can this be? How can that be regarded as an index and a guide to the true Church, which is seen to point different ways and to lead the inquirer into diverse and opposite paths?

Once more, as the Church of England denies not to the Church of Rome her apostolic descent, she

* "We are at peace," says Mr. Newman, "with Rome as regards the essentials of faith; but she tolerates us as little as any sect or heresy. We admit her baptism and her orders; her custom is to re-baptize and re-ordain our members who chance to join her."— *Lectures on Romanism*, p. 260.

ought not, on that ground, to claim for herself more than is allowed to the church which she has abandoned. And yet she does claim more. Notwithstanding her acknowledged derivation from the Romish church ; at least, notwithstanding that her chief pretensions to holy apostolic orders are built upon her kindred to, or connection with this church, she does not hesitate, at the same time, to speak of her spiritual relation in the most derogatory and degrading terms. She proclaims her to be polluted and corrupt ; calls her an idolatrous church ; and in the book of Homilies, which, by the twenty-fifth of the Thirty-nine Articles, is declared to contain a goodly and wholesome doctrine, the Church of Rome is described in language so foul and loathsome that it is impossible for me to repeat it in this place. And yet this very church, thus stigmatized and branded, is admitted to possess the true apostolic succession. What, then, becomes of the wonderful virtue ascribed to this “ succession,” if the very church to whose care it was first committed, and by whose instrumentality it has been conveyed to other communions, could, after all, be guilty of such odious idolatrous practices as those charged upon the Church of Rome ? Can anything, I ask, be more demonstrative than all this of the unspeakable weakness and folly of the claims and pretensions set up by the high-church or Puseyite party ?



After what has now been said, nothing more, I think, need be added in condemnation of the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. As a bare fact, there is no trustworthy historical evidence to support it,—no evidence that any reasonable, sober-minded man would attach the smallest value to ; and if, as I have before remarked, the fact could be established, the doctrine founded upon it is a mere gratuitous assumption, and, in no degree, deducible from the premises laid down. You may trace,—I would say to the divines of the Episcopal Church,—you may trace your clerical ordination up to those who were ordained or appointed by some one of the apostles, and what then ? What does that *alone* prove ? Unless the Scriptures have declared that, with such ordination, there was also combined the gift of the Holy Spirit, like power and like authority to that possessed by the apostles, no conclusion in favour of such a gift, in proof of such a possession, can be justly inferred from it. But not only have the Scriptures made no such declaration, but their language implies the very reverse. Nothing analogous to a priesthood, such as that which existed among the Jews and Pagans, was instituted by Christ. It was not the temple but the synagogue that was the model of the early Christian Church. In that there was no altar, no sacrifice, no priest. The Christian ministers are pastors and teachers.

They are not lords over God's heritage. They are not to exercise dominion over the faith of their fellow-christians, but as much as possible, to be helpers of their joy. They are not mediators, interposing between the creature and the Creator, for there is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. They are not to be seekers after titles and dignities, fond of greetings in the market-places, and ambitious of being called Rabbi, Rabbi, for there is only one Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren.

When I take a glance back at this doctrine of Apostolic Succession, and observe what it embraces and what it lays claim to, according to the representations of the Oxford school, it almost surpasses belief, that what has no foundation in Scripture—what is admitted to have none or next to none—and what is presumed to rest upon a fact, which, though of itself it would prove nothing for the purpose alleged, is, after all, involved in total obscurity and uncertainty, nay more, is hardly possible to have happened,—when I think of all this, I confess, there rises up before me a most humiliating picture of human delusion ; and, but for my faith in the providence of God, and that he will, in the end, make all things work together for good, I should be inclined to despair of any cause, however just and true, that had nothing to rest upon but

its own intrinsic evidence and worth.—The next topic that will engage our attention is the authority of Tradition and the Fathers. This forms another characteristic feature of the Oxford school of divinity, and,—affecting as it does the very foundations of our Christian faith, the rule of our belief,—demands from us an attentive and careful examination.

LECTURE IV.

HAVING shown, in the last lecture, that the doctrine of what is called “Apostolic Succession” is opposed alike to the testimony of Scripture and the evidence of history, as well as to the judgement of some of the most accomplished scholars and divines of the Church of England itself, I now proceed to the consideration of another leading characteristic of the Oxford theology,—one indeed without which the whole fabric must fall to pieces,—and that is, the authority of Tradition. After what has been said in a former lecture, you will be at no loss to understand why it is that the Anglo-Catholic divines call to their aid such a principle as this. Acknowledging, as they do, that the Scriptures alone afford very little substantial or direct argument in their favour—feeling the weakness of their cause as resting solely on this ground—they are under the necessity of looking out for some other basis or foundation on which to take their stand. This foundation or basis they think is to be found in the principle of Tradition. If they can show

that the reports or hearsays, passing from one to another among the early Christians, and recorded in the writings of those called the Fathers, are of co-ordinate authority with the Scriptures, or, at least, of sufficient authority to determine the sense of Scripture, their system, they imagine, will be placed in a position of greater strength and security, and be less exposed to the attacks of hostile assailants.

I suppose it to be the great object,—assuredly it is the professed object,—of all parties of Christians to get at the true meaning of the language of Scripture ; to learn what was actually done and taught by Christ and his apostles ; to obtain possession of the ideas, the thoughts that had passed in their minds, and which they designed to convey to the minds of others. But how is this to be accomplished ? Language is an instrument of thought ; and if the same word or sentence admitted but of one construction,—if it had always a certain definite meaning which no one could possibly mistake,—if, the moment that it was heard or read, it suggested to every mind exactly the same idea, nothing more would be required. But unfortunately this is not the case : there is no language possessing such a quality as this. A degree of ambiguity frequently hangs over it, especially when it relates to matters of a general or abstract nature,—to things remote from sense and common apprehension.

Attempts therefore have been made to correct this defect, in matters relating to Christian belief, by fixing upon some standard for ascertaining and determining the true sense of Scripture. Instead of leaving it to be discovered by means of serious attention, calm consideration and sober judgement, aided by the lights of learning and research, another test is proposed, which, to the mass of mankind, will, it is said, supersede all further inquiry, and save them from much toilsome and, for the most part, unrequited labour. The Roman Catholic asserts that this object can be obtained only by listening to the interpretation of certain authorized persons within the circle of his communion, to whom has been committed the power of infallibly ascertaining, and the right of formally declaring the true sense of Scripture ; and that all, therefore, which the common Christian believer has to do in this matter is, to follow implicitly the guidance and to bow submissively to the decisions of the Catholic Church. In substance the Oxford divines say very much the same thing. Between them and the Romanists there may be, in words, a trifling distinction, but in reality little or no difference. They both agree that the Scriptures are not the only foundation of a Christian faith ; that, in addition to this, there is another ground or basis on which it should be made to rest, and to this is given the

name of Tradition. Both Romanists and ourselves, says Mr. Newman, maintain as follows :—" that whatever doctrine the primitive ages unanimously attest, whether by consent of Fathers or by Councils.... whatever may fairly and reasonably be considered to be the universal belief of those ages, is to be received as coming from the apostles*." And again, " the Church enforces a fact, Apostolical Tradition, as the doctrinal key to Scripture†." " When the sense of Scripture, as interpreted by reason, is contrary to the sense given to it by Catholic antiquity, we ought to abide with the latter‡."

That we should not depend upon the Scriptures alone for a knowledge of Christian truth is argued from this circumstance, that the apostles cannot be supposed to have told us, in the brief memoranda which they have left behind them, all that they might have told us (if time and leisure had been at their command) concerning the conduct and conversation of Christ, and their own life and labours. There must be much, which both they and our Lord said and did, which is not contained in the New Testament, but which, notwithstanding, was very likely to be impressed upon the minds and memories of those who witnessed them. Such things would, of course, be often talked of and

* Newman on Romanism, p. 62.

† Ibid. p. 232.

‡ Ibid. p. 162.

reported from one to another, till at length they were taken down in writing and placed on more enduring record. We have therefore, it is said, what may be called the written and the unwritten word. The written word is that which lies before us in the New Testament, and proceeded directly from the hands of the apostles and their companions. The unwritten word is the traditionary matter deposited in the works of the Fathers ; and, containing, as is alleged, the oral instructions of the apostles, is entitled, equally with the written word, to our attention and regard. No one can deny that between what the apostles delivered in writing, and what they delivered by word of mouth, there is little or no difference in the degree of interest and importance attaching to each. I say, there is little or no difference, *provided* it can be clearly ascertained that what they are said to have delivered by word of mouth was actually delivered by them. But here lies the gist of the whole matter. We contend that there is no such certainty to be had. Admitting the authenticity of the books of the New Testament, there are ample grounds for believing that we have in them a just and faithful account of what Christ said and did. For, being drawn up by those who were his immediate companions and disciples, no reasonable doubt of their competency to the task they

undertook can well be entertained. But of the competency of those, who came one or two hundred years afterwards, to add anything to the original record, the strongest doubts may justly and reasonably be felt. In fact, accounts of what took place at any considerable distance of time, derived from mere common reports circulating from mouth to mouth, especially if they relate to opinions or speculations, are seldom worthy of much regard. It is impossible to consider as trustworthy anything depending upon so precarious and uncertain a mode of transmission as that of oral delivery. We know that often a few words, a simple fact, become in a little time, by this sort of verbal communication, completely discoloured and distorted. To suppose, therefore, that discourses, delivered years ago, and repeated from one to another for a long course of time before they are written down, should descend to posterity in their original form,—untainted and uncorrupted,—with nothing added,—nothing changed,—nothing omitted,—nothing perverted or modified, is a supposition contrary to all probability, and directly contrary to all experience*.

* “ Suppose (what is not a fact) that there existed uninterrupted reports of certain doctrines delivered only *verbally* by the apostles, they would be reports made in the *words* of the reporters. But we well know that a single word added or neglected, an ornamental figure of speech, an interpretation of the reporter, intro-

From these general observations I pass on to a more particular examination of the theory in question. As it is important that we should clearly understand what that theory is, the extent to which it goes, and the qualifications with which it is accompanied, I shall give a statement of it in the words of its advocates and supporters. Of these the chief are the writers of the Oxford Tracts,—called Tractarians,—Mr. Palmer, Mr. Newman, and Mr. Keble. Their views of the nature and authority of Tradition will now be presented in the order here mentioned.

1. The Tractarians. They say, “Scripture and Tradition taken together are the joint rule of faith*.” In Tract 34 they give two quotations, one from Tertullian, the other from St. Basil, in which, after describing various practices that formerly prevailed in the Church with respect to baptism and other rites, it is added, “if you demand a scriptural reason for these and such-like observances, we can give you none ; all we say to you

duced with the best intentions, may alter a doctrinal statement, so as not to be recognized by the original teacher of the doctrine. Sum up the chances of such additions, wrong illustrations, and mistakes in the course of many centuries, and then calculate the unreasonableness of supposing the salvation of mankind to depend on the acceptance of such tradition !”—*Second Travels of an Irish Gentleman*, vol. i. p. 226.

* Tracts, No. 78. p. 2.

is, that tradition directs, usage sanctions, faith obeys." And again: "Of those articles of doctrine and preaching which are in the custody of the Church, some come to us in Scripture itself, and some are conveyed to us by a continuous tradition in mystical depositaries. Both have equal claims on our devotion."

2. Mr. Palmer, in his work on the Church, says, "The injunction of the English Church to her preachers is, that they shall not teach anything to be religiously held or believed, except what agrees with the doctrine of the Old or New Testament, and what the Catholic Fathers and ancient bishops have collected from the same doctrine. This recognizes most fully the guidance of tradition in matters of faith; and in matters of discipline the same is also admitted. . . . In short, the reverence of the Catholics in England for the tradition of the universal Church in all matters of doctrine and discipline is so manifest, that Walchius accounts them excessive in their reverence for the Fathers, and they were entitled 'the Church of the Traditioners' by the Puritans*."

3. Mr. Newman, after stating in what way the Protestants and Romanists interpret the meaning of Scripture,—the one by their private judgement, the other by the infallible decisions of the Pope in

* Palmer on the Church, vol. i. p. 180.

general council,—observes, “ We neither hold that the Catholic Church is an infallible judge of Scripture, nor that each individual may judge for himself, but that the Church has *authority*, and that individuals may judge for themselves outside the range of that authority. We consider the Church as a witness, a keeper and witness of Catholic Tradition ; and in this sense invested with authority, just as in political matters an ambassador, possessed of instructions from his government, would speak with authority. . . . She bears witness to a fact that such and such a doctrine, or such a sense of Scripture, has ever been received and came from the apostles ; the proof of which lies, first in her own unanimity throughout her various branches, next in the writings of the ancient Fathers. We consider Antiquity and Catholicity to be the real guides, and the Church their organ. . . . The phrase ‘ Rule of Faith,’ which is now commonly taken to mean the Bible by itself, would seem, in the judgement of the English Church, properly to belong to the Bible and Catholic Tradition taken together. These two together make up a joint rule. We have as little warrant for rejecting Ancient Consent as for rejecting Scripture itself*.”

4. Mr. Keble, the late Oxford Professor of Poetry, who has written a Treatise expressly on the

* Newman on Romanism, pp. 328, 329, 330, 333, 335.

subject of Tradition, gives this explanation of the doctrine: "It may help to the understanding and application of the whole argument, if I point out three distinct fields of Christian knowledge, in neither of which can we advance satisfactorily or safely without constant appeal to Tradition. The first is the system and arrangement of fundamental articles, so far as they have come down to us systematic and arranged. We, that is all of the Anglican Church who have had any regular training in theology, are so early taught to trace the creed in the Scriptures, and to refer at once certain portions of both Testaments to certain high mysteries of the Catholic faith, that it commonly appears to ourselves as though we had learned those mysteries directly from the Scriptures. But there are few, surely, who on careful reflection would not be compelled to acknowledge that the Creed, or some corresponding catechetical instruction, had prepossessed them with these truths before ever they thought of proving them from Holy Writ. I need hardly remind you of the unquestioned historical fact, that the very Nicene Creed itself, to which, perhaps, of all *formulae*, we are most indebted for our sound belief in the proper divinity of the Son of God,—even this creed had its origin, not from Scripture, but from Tradition. The second great subject on which most of us are unconsciously

indebted to the ancient Catholic tradition is the *Interpretation of Scripture*, especially of those parts which less obviously relate to the mysteries of the Gospel*."

These passages, selected from the writings of the most eminent of the Oxford school of divinity, will, I think, taken together, convey a tolerably correct idea of their views of Tradition. Hence may be deduced the general proposition that the clergy, in their collective or corporate capacity, are the authorized revealers or proclaimers of Christian truth, whose statements and expositions of that truth the

* Keble on Tradition, pp. 34, 35. There appears to be no difference between the doctrine of Tradition as expounded by the divines of the Oxford school and that maintained by the Romanists, as will be evident, I think, from the following explanation of it given by Dr. Milner: "When any fresh controversy," says he, "arises in the Church, the fundamental maxim of the bishops and popes, to whom it belongs to decide upon it, is, not to consult their own private opinion or interpretation of Scripture, but to inquire 'what is and ever has been the doctrine of the Church' concerning it. Hence their cry is and ever has been, on such occasions, as well in her councils as out of them, 'So we have received, so the universal Church believes; let there be no new doctrine, none but what has been delivered down to us by Tradition.'"—*End of Controversy*, Letter xi.

Bossuet speaks in the same tone, and Bellarmine says, "The first foundation of our faith is the word of God; only we add, that besides this first foundation another secondary foundation is needed, that is, the witness of the Church. For we do not know for certain what God has revealed, except by the testimony of the Church."—See *Newman's Romanism*, pp. 72, 73.

people are in duty bound to receive. This is the conclusion necessarily following from the foregoing representations of the nature and office of Tradition, and of the authority of the Church, as may be thus shown. The traditions of the early Church, contained in the writings of the Fathers, are to be received as genuine apostolic teaching. Of these traditions the Church is a witness, and has authority to declare what they are, and the sense they put upon Scripture. But the Church, what is it? what are we to understand by it? It is but a mere word—a pure abstraction—a general term, and has no signification unless as the sign or abbreviated expression of a certain number of persons more or less. Now who are those persons that, according to the Puseyite scheme, are to stand as the representatives of the Church,—whose voice is to be considered as the voice of the Church? Who, I ask, but the clergy—the episcopally-ordained “successors of the apostles,” in council or convocation assembled? With them, therefore, it rests to say what is the true sense of Scripture and what is not*.

* That this is a just inference may be fairly maintained, not only indirectly as a legitimate deduction from the principles of the Oxford school, but *directly* from the very language, the precise words, made use of by Mr. Newman. He says (*Romanism* p. 170), “One chief cause of sects among us is, that the ‘Church’ voice is not heard clearly and forcibly; she does not exercise her own right of interpreting Scripture; she does not arbitrate, de—

To this the doctrine of Tradition, as above laid down, must bring us at last. Now let us inquire a little into the matter of some of the traditions of the early Church as contained in the writings of the Fathers; first, generally, in respect to various points of belief and practice; and next, as they bear upon the subject of Scripture-interpretation.

I shall begin with Papias and Irenæus, who lived in the second century.

Among the predictions which our Lord is said to

side, condemn." And speaking (p. 193) of the difficulty which is felt by persons of various denominations in interpreting Scripture for themselves, he says, "None can solve the great secret and utter the mystery of its pages. One makes trial, then another; but one and all in turn are foiled. They retire, as the sages of Babylon, and make way for Daniel. The Church Catholic, the true prophet of God, alone is able to tell the dream and its interpretation." And where and what is this Church Catholic? He tells us in page 58 that "the Church Catholic in this country manifests herself in the Church, commonly so called, as her representative." These views may be thus expressed in the form of a syllogism:—

The Church Catholic is the only true interpreter of Scripture;

The Church of England is in this country the Church Catholic;

Therefore the Church of England is with us the only true interpreter of Scripture.

And if we go a step further and ask who represent the Church of England? the answer is, the bishops and clergy in convocation assembled; so that the bishops and clergy are to be regarded as the true interpreters of Scripture. This, I say, is the one inevitable conclusion growing out of the positions laid down by Mr. Newman and his coadjutors.

have delivered on the subject of what is called the Millenium (a favourite doctrine with the early Christian fathers), Papias mentions this as one ; derived, as he states, from the elders who had conversed with the apostle John :—

“ And the Lord said, The days shall come in which vines shall spring up, each of them having ten thousand branches, and one branch ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand twigs, and on every twig ten thousand clusters, and in every cluster ten thousand grapes, and every grape, when pressed, shall yield twenty-five firkins of wine. And when any one of the saints shall proceed to gather a cluster, some other cluster shall exclaim, ‘ I am a better cluster ; take me, and bless the Lord through me.’ In like manner a single grain of wheat shall produce ten thousand ears, and each ear shall produce ten thousand grains, and every grain ten pounds of flour ; and all the other fruits and grains and herbs shall abound in the same proportion.”

As early as the close of the first century it was given out by Tradition that Judas, in direct opposition to the account we have of his death in the Acts of the Apostles, did not die in the way there stated, but that he lived sometime afterwards in a frightful state of disease. “ Judas,” says Papias, “ walked about in this world, a great example of the effects of impiety ; being so much swollen in

his body that he could not find room to pass through an opening which a cart could easily be led through; and thus he was crushed by a cart, and his entrails squeezed out of his body." Now this is what we get by means of tradition—of common rumour—of hearsay reports. This is the wretched nonsense which Papias treasured up after the lapse of little more than half a century from the death of Christ. So early did the work of fable begin, and so great was the credulity which then prevailed.

Irenæus, who was contemporary with Justin Martyr, not only declares, contrary to the account given in the Gospels, that Christ was fifty years old at the time of his crucifixion, but that this was the concurrent testimony of all who had lived with St. John and the other apostles. And yet this tradition, which, as it relates not to a doctrine or opinion, but to a matter of fact, and running up close to the age of the apostles, is more entitled, perhaps, than any other to attention and respect, is undoubtedly fabulous and false. If this were the only instance of what is delivered to us by the early fathers as traditional truth, but which we know to be mere fable, it would not be fair to draw from it a sweeping general argument against their trustworthiness in relations of this kind. But the fact is that such instances are not unfrequent. We have them occurring again and again. At all

events, they are so often to be met with as wholly to destroy all serious belief in statements resting upon no better foundation. In corroboration of what has now been said, I will present you with a few additional examples of the traditions recorded by them.

Irenæus affirms, "that all who were truly disciples of Jesus wrought miracles in his name, for the good of mankind. Some cast out devils, so that those from whom they were ejected often turned believers and continued in the church. Others had the knowledge of future events. Others healed the sick by the imposition of hands. Even the dead had been raised and lived many years afterwards."

Tertullian, who came a little after Irenæus, tells a story about a fine city which was suspended over Judæa for the space of forty days, and declares that the miracle was acknowledged by a multitude of Gentile witnesses.

Cyprian, the scholar of Tertullian, says, "Besides visions of the night, even boys among us are filled with the Holy Spirit, and, in fits of ecstasy, see, hear, and speak things by which the Lord thinks fit to instruct us."

Jerome, the author of the version of Scripture called the Vulgate, declares that he received a severe castigation at the hands of angels for the sin of reading the heathen works of Cicero and Virgil.

Gregory of Nyssa relates a curious story about his namesake, St. Gregory of Neo-cæsarea, of which the following is an abridgement. He says, "that being on a journey, he was driven, one stormy night, to take refuge in a heathen temple where the demons used to present themselves to the priest. By invoking the name of Christ, he put them all to flight. When the priest came, the next morning, to discharge his usual functions, the evil spirits appeared, and told him that they had been driven away by a stranger and had not the power to return. Upon this the priest grew very angry, but Gregory caring nothing for his anger, assured him that his power was superior to that of devils, and that he could drive them wherever he pleased. The priest then begged that he would bring them back again to the temple. To this Gregory consented, and wrote this short notice upon a piece of paper, 'Gregory to Satan, enter.' With this the priest was dismissed, and, laying the paper on the altar, brought the devils back again." It is added that the miracle had the effect of converting the pagan priest. Other stories of the like kind are related in the life of Gregory, one of which states that the Virgin Mary, accompanied by St. John, appeared to him in a vision, and explained to him the mystery of godliness in a short creed, which was taken down in writing, and a copy of

it left as a legacy to the Church of Neo-cæsarea, of which he was bishop.

Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, declares that, in imitation of our Saviour's miracle at Cana in Galilee, several fountains and rivers were, in his days, annually turned into wine. "This took place," he says, "with a fountain of Cibyra, a city of Caria, and also with one at Gerasa in Arabia*."

Now these and such like are the tales gravely related in the writings of the early Fathers as authentic verities, and entitled to implicit belief. What more, then, is needed to show, how utterly deficient they were in all those qualities which are necessary to secure confidence and credit? But it is not only in traditions of the kind just mentioned—in the ready and undiscerning reception which they gave to all kinds of floating rumours,—that their credulity and weakness are so flagrantly exhibited. The same feebleness of judgement, the same unsoundness of understanding, the same absence of all accurate observation and just discrimination, the same love of the marvellous, the same fondness for everything fanciful and mystical, is also conspicuous in their statements of doctrine and in

* Most of the instances here given are selected from the great number detailed in Middleton's 'Free Inquiry into the miraculous powers of the early ages.' To the general correctness of Middleton's account Mr. Newman himself bears testimony in his *Essay* on the same subject, lately published, p. 35.

their expositions of Scripture; and yet Mr. Keble says, that in the field of Christian knowledge we cannot advance safely or satisfactorily without constant appeal to tradition. He considers it not only as a landmark of apostolic doctrine, but as the best guide to the sense of Scripture. In illustration of its value in this respect, he asks, with great simplicity and apparently with entire gravity, "How else could we know with tolerable certainty that Melchisedek's feast is a type of the blessed Eucharist? or that the book of Canticles (the Song of Solomon) is an allegory, representing the mystical union betwixt Christ and his Church? or that wisdom in the book of Proverbs is a name of the second person in the most Holy Trinity*?"

If these interpretations of Scripture appeared to Mr. Keble so striking and beautiful, as to be worthy of being held up as specimens of the extraordinary services which the Fathers have, in this way, rendered to the cause of Christian truth, what are we to think of the examples which follow†?

* Keble on Tradition, p. 36.

† One would suppose that if we could depend upon Tradition for anything, it would be such things as manners, customs and matters of fact. Opinions are much more liable, in the process of transmission, to be misrepresented and distorted. And yet, notwithstanding this very clear and, as I had imagined, admitted maxim, Mr. Newman, by a perverseness which is almost inexplicable, maintains, "that the Catholic interpretation of certain por-

In an Epistle attributed to Clement of Rome, the scarlet thread held out by Rahab is described as a sign or type of "the blood of our Lord, by which there is redemption to all who trust and hope in God*."

The waters that gushed from Horeb are by some of the Fathers represented as an emblem of baptism. Justin Martyr regarded almost all the rods and sticks and pieces of wood mentioned in the Old Testament as symbols of the cross of Christ. And pursuing the same idea he says, "When the son of Nun, called Jesus (Joshua), led the people on to battle, Moses employed himself in prayer with his hands stretched out in the form of a cross. And the people did not conquer because Moses prayed, but because Moses was exhibiting the figure of the cross." And the passage in Is. ix. 6, "the government shall be upon his shoulder," is construed by him, "the power of the cross shall be upon his shoulder."

Irenæus's exposition of Scripture is much after the same fashion, equally trifling, and equally contemptible. Treating of the distinction of animals into clean and unclean, he says, "The Law foretold tions of Scripture comes close upon the highest kind of Tradition; and that, on the other hand, the tradition of facts is very uncertain, and often apocryphal." The very reverse, I should say, of the real truth.—See *Lectures on Romanism*, p. 305.

* See Tracts for the Times, No. 87. p. 4.

these things figuratively,—by animals, denoting men. Those who divide the hoof and chew the cud it pronounces *clean* ; those who do neither, *unclean*. Who then are the clean ? Those who believe in the Father and the Son. This is their firmness or double hoof ; and to meditate day and night on the laws of God, so as to be adorned with good works, is to chew the cud. But the unclean neither divide the hoof nor chew the cud ; that is, neither have faith in God, nor meditate on his laws. This is the abomination of the Gentiles.”

Such is the sort of interpretation in which he indulges and in which he is followed by many others who came after him*, especially by Clement of

* For instance, these two passages from the Psalms,—“ Let the lifting up of my hands be as an evening sacrifice,” and “ I have called daily upon thee ; I have stretched out my hands unto thee,” —are quoted by Cyprian as prophetic of our Lord’s crucifixion.

The late Dr. Burton, who has written so much on the opinions of the early Fathers, observes, that “ Origen carried to an unwarrantable length the system of allegorizing the Scriptures. This fanciful method of interpretation was not an invention of Origen, nor of the Christian Fathers. They found it already carried to a great length by the Alexandrian Jews.....It was laid down as a principle with expositors of this school, that every passage of Scripture contained at least three meanings : one, which was the literal or historical ; another, which conveyed some moral lesson ; and a third, which was still more sublime and mystical ; which, under the semblance of something visible and earthly, was intended to reveal the truths of the invisible and spiritual world.” —*Dr. Burton’s History of the Christian Church*, pp. 321, 322.

Alexandria, who quotes this very passage. Do not suppose that I have picked out the most absurd and contemptible things to be found in the Fathers, for I assure you there is much more of the same kind, if not far worse, which has been left behind. It is truly surprising that any man, with the knowledge that such things exist, can hold up the writings, in which they are found, as authentic depositories of sacred truths not revealed in the Scriptures, or as containing the fullest development of those which have been revealed. And yet this is one of the points for which the Oxford divines are so earnestly striving. They seem almost to regard the works of the Fathers as of equal or concurrent authority with the Scriptures themselves. "Do they not," says Mr. Keble, "employ church tradition as parallel to Scripture, not as derived from it? and, consequently, as fixing the interpretation of disputed texts, not simply by the judgement of the Church, but by authority of that holy spirit which inspired the oral teaching itself, of which such tradition is the record*." Now, of what traditions,—of what oral teaching does he here speak? Would he include any of the stories before mentioned? Would he include that of Irenæus,—who lived so near the times of the apostles,—when he said, that it was the unanimous tradition of all the

* Keble on Tradition, pp. 23, 24.

old men then living that Christ was not crucified till he had reached the age of fifty? Would he include the prediction ascribed to Christ, on the authority of Papias, about the vine and its ten thousand branches? Would he include the tale that so early circulated, in opposition to the account given in the Acts, concerning the fate that befell the traitor Judas? And if we are to reject these as mere idle fables, notwithstanding the positive manner in which they are asserted and vouched for, and that too by the earliest of the Christian Fathers, what are we to receive? How are we to distinguish the true from the false, mixed up together as they are, and woven into one uniform texture? The Church, we are told, is to determine this. The Church! what Church? For there are various churches, all inscribed with the signature of apostolic descent, yet each asserting the authority of traditions which the other denies. By what criterion, then, are we to decide upon the verity of traditions thus delivered to us? Are we to trust to our own private judgment and make that the test of admission or rejection?

Not so, say the Oxford divines; "we do not even claim for the Church, in its earliest and purest ages, divine authority, except in its full and unexceptionable consent. So that there is material difference between a passage in St. Irenæus, recording the

doctrine delivered by St. John, and a passage in the Acts, recording a discourse of St. Peter. . . . In the Scriptures we find the promise which guarantees the infallibility of the Church* when she really speaks in her complete and universal character†.” It is not, therefore, what Irenæus or Tertullian may singly or together relate that is to be regarded as divine tradition ; but it is what they and all the other Christian Fathers assert in common. “ For this consent and agreement,” say the Anglo-Catholics, “ whensoever it is full, complete and undeniable, we claim a twofold authority : affirmatively, to determine a doctrine or practice, apostolical ; negatively, to exclude all doctrines or practices with which it is utterly unacquainted, as unapostolical‡.” It is the consent of the universal

* Strange words these to come from the pen of a Protestant writer, even though he be an Anglo-Catholic ! But they are not peculiar to the authors of the *British Critic* ; Mr. Newman is also familiar with them. He says, “ Our reception of the Athanasian Creed is another proof of our holding the *infallibility* of the Church, as some of our divines express it, in matters of saving faith. . . . If we inquire the *ground* of this authority in the Church, the Creed answers, that she speaks merely as the organ of the Catholic voice. . . . The Church Catholic is pronounced to have been all along, and by implication as destined ever to be, the guardian of the pure and undefiled faith, or to be indefectible in that faith.” And again, “ The Church Catholic is unerring in its declarations of faith or saving doctrine.”—*Newman’s Romanism*, pp. 234, 235, 259.

† *British Critic*, No. 50. p. 461.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 456.

Church, and not that of any one branch or member of it, which stamps upon the tradition or doctrine the mark of authority, and demands an implicit acquiescence in its truth. This is, in fact, the same with that celebrated rule or maxim laid down by Vincentius Lirinensis, viz. *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus traditum est*. We are to believe whatever has been delivered to us always, everywhere, and by all. The criterion is, Antiquity, Universality, Catholicity.

If we were to take these words literally and strictly, if we were rigidly and constantly to apply them as a test or measure of apostolic doctrine, I do not say it would, in every instance, put us in possession of Christian truth, but generally, I think, it would be a sure method of ascertaining what truths are of primary and paramount importance. The points, in which all Christians are agreed everywhere, now and at all times, are, I should say, the only points that ought to be deemed vital and essential. Understood in this sense, and the articles necessary to constitute a Christian believer, instead of being thirty-nine, would be reduced to a very small number indeed. Understood in this sense, and I know of no rule more valuable and important,—more calculated to promote peace on earth and good will among men. Understood in this sense, and it is impossible that any better principle could

be set up around which to rally the divided and scattered members of the Christian community and form them into one great comprehensive universal church. Understood according to the plain exact meaning of the words, and they embody the true Catholic spirit of genuine Christianity.

But, unhappily, this is not the way in which we are commonly taught to receive them. This is not the sense put upon them by the Oxford divines. On the contrary, they would, if so construed, spurn and condemn them as leading to the most deadly and destructive heresy.

According to them, the faith of the universal Church is not the faith common to all the churches of Christ in all places and of all times. That to which the character of antiquity, universality, catholicity is assigned, is not the faith by which all the members of the Christian Church, "however divided here below," are brought under one general denomination, and knit together by one common bond of allegiance to the same Master. No; they hold out no such generous, enlarged views as these. By the universal Church they mean the orthodox episcopal Church; by the community of Christians they mean the professors of the orthodox creed. If it could be shown that the Christians of the first ages had been all of one mind; if they had all agreed in their statements and expositions of Chris-

tian doctrine, there might be some little plausibility in appealing to them as "authority." But when, as Chillingworth says, "there are Fathers against Fathers, the same Fathers against themselves, a consent of Fathers of one age against a consent of Fathers of another age,"—when it is notorious that their writings are often so obscure as to perplex the most careful and discerning reader, and that on account of this obscurity their meaning is easily mistaken by any one who, wishing to find his own opinions supported by theirs, imagines that he has found it so,—"just as he did," says Daillé, "who, on hearing the ringing of bells, thought they perfectly sounded out what he in his own thoughts had fancied,"—when it is remembered that no such unanimity as that which has been ascribed to them, nor anything approaching to it, existed among them, there remains not the shadow of a reason for the deference which we are required to pay to them, and the confidence which is demanded to be placed in them.

The plea of apostolic tradition is, however, no new thing. It was taken up by the Fathers themselves, and used by them as an effectual weapon in resisting the attacks of an adversary. In the controversy about the time of celebrating the festival of Easter, apostolic tradition was alike appealed to on both sides of the question. Papias and his fol-

lower Irenæus were the main promoters and asserters of it. Papias says, "If at any time I met with one who had conversed with the elders, I inquired after the sayings of the elders; what Andrew or what Peter said; or what Philip, what Thomas, or what James had said; what John or Matthew, or what any other disciples of the Lord were wont to say,—for I was of opinion that I could not profit so much by books as by the living*." Irenæus uses very much the same language. It appears, then, that these two early Fathers were the first chief collectors of those unrecorded tales which go by the name of Tradition. But it is clear, from what Eusebius says of them, that their fabulous character did not long remain undiscovered. He informs us "that Papias was a weak man, of a very shallow understanding, as it appeared from his writings, and by mistaking the meaning of the apostles imposed these silly traditions on Irenæus and the greatest part of the ecclesiastical writers, who, reflecting on the age of the man and his near approach to the apostles, were drawn by him into the same opinions†."

Here, then, we have the positive unequivocal assurance of an ancient writer, himself a Christian Father and of as high a credit as any one of his

* Lardner's Works, vol. ii. p. 107.

† Second Travels of an Irish Gentleman, vol. i. p. 231.

age, that the traditions of the early Church consisted for the most part of fabulous stories, thus refuting the extravagant pretensions to authority set up for them by the Oxford divines*.

But even supposing that we should allow the consent of the early Church to be taken as an index or a sign of Christian truth, how are we to get at the knowledge of this consent? How are we to ascertain what were the various opinions held by the Fathers, scattered as they are among such voluminous writings,—writings which are stated to have occupied Archbishop Usher eighteen or nineteen years of his life to get through, though he read a portion of them every day? You must learn this, it will be said, from the Church, that is, from the clergy, the episcopally ordained clergy, the divinely commissioned successors of the apostles. They will acquaint you with the doctrines which were generally received, with the articles of faith which obtained the consent of the universal Church; that is, you must trust to their representations of what the Fathers say, and rely upon their judgement for

* “The matter of tradition,” says Jeremy Taylor, “is in very many cases so uncertain, so false, so suspicious, so contradictory, so improbable, so unproved, that if a question be contested and be offered to be proved only by tradition, it will be very hard to propose such a proposition to the belief of all men with any impetuousness or resolved determination.”—*Liberty of Propheſying*, p. 141. 8vo ed. 1817.

the right construction of its meaning. Tradition is the true interpreter of Scripture, and they are the true interpreters of Tradition. Again, you see, all resolves itself into the authority of the priest. He is to be the dictator of your faith. He is to announce to you the decisions of what he calls the church, and with those decisions, as Bishop Horsley once said of our laws, we have nothing to do but to obey them.

After all, however, we are told that this famous canon of Vincent of Lerins must not be taken in the broad and literal acceptance of its meaning, but must be received with many limitations and qualifications before it can be used as a test of sound Catholic doctrine. That, it is said, is to be regarded as genuine Christian doctrine which has been taught in the Church "always, everywhere, and by all." By 'always,' however, we are to understand the period extending from the second to the end of the fourth century; 'everywhere' means among those only who are termed orthodox; and 'by all' is signified a large majority of a certain class of writers denominated the Fathers.

"What is meant," says Mr. Newman, "by being 'taught always?' Does it mean in every century, or every year, or every month? Does 'everywhere' mean in every country, or in every diocese? And does 'the consent of Fathers' require us to produce

the direct testimony of every one of them? How many Fathers, how many places, how many instances constitute a fulfillment of the test proposed? It is, then, from the nature of the case, a condition which never can be satisfied as fully as it might have been."

"If the age of true Catholicism be extended as far as the end of the fourth century, little would be gained by the addition of the fifth or sixth. If the voluminous remains of that era will not afford a standard of Catholic doctrine, there seems little profit to be gained from antiquity at all*."

We are also reminded by another of the same school with Newman, that if the Fathers appear to disagree, it may have arisen from the reverential reserve which they practised in every part of religion in proportion to its sacredness. "If we would deal fairly with the subject, we must make allowance for this reserve. Knowing for certain that it did exist, we are bound to take it into the account, and often to give those who wrote under its influence credit for a more thorough agreement in high and mysterious doctrines than their words at first sight would otherwise appear to express†."

But even with these explanations and restrictions, taking the rule to mean a general agreement

* Romanism, pp. 68, 252, 253.

† Tracts for the Times, No. 89. p. 13.

among the Fathers, and not a universal one ; appropriating the word “all” to the orthodox party alone, and “always” to the period lying somewhere between the second century and the beginning of the fifth ; it is still inadmissible as a test of Christian doctrine, and fails moreover in fulfilling the purpose for which it is so often referred to. .

Before proceeding with the examination of the rule in question in its modified shape, one preliminary explanation seems to be necessary. When the concurrent voice of the early Fathers is spoken of as evidence of the apostolic character of an institution or a doctrine, we must put out of view all such plain facts and doctrines as the Messiahship of our Lord, his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. As these are nowhere denied by any one bearing the Christian name,—as all who profess to believe in Christ admit them as undoubted and unquestionable truths,—as they belong to the common faith of the orthodox and the heterodox, they are not the points for which Tradition or Catholic consent is often, if ever, alleged. They lie plainly and openly before us in the New Testament ; there every one who has eyes to see must see them. No veil of mystery or reserve is drawn over them. “Like stars they shine aloft for all.” The way-faring man, though a fool, cannot help perceiving them. It is not for these, therefore, that the test

of Vincent is so ostentatiously put forward. They need it not. It is for those doctrines and practices styled orthodox, which formed part of the creed and institute of the orthodox churches, that the general consent of the Fathers is so often and so much insisted on. Thus Mr. Keble says, "Not a few fragments yet remain, very precious and sacred fragments, of the unwritten teaching of the first age of the Church. The paramount authority, for example, of the successors of the apostles in church government; the threefold order established from the beginning; the virtue of the blessed Eucharist as a commemorative sacrifice; infant baptism; and above all the Catholic doctrine of the most Holy Trinity, as contained in the Nicene Creed: all these, however surely confirmed from Scripture, are yet ascertainable parts of the primitive unwritten system, of which we yet enjoy the benefit. If any one ask how we ascertain them, we answer, by application of the well-known rule, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* *." And further on he writes in the same strain: "The points of Catholic tradition are these; the canon of Scripture, the full doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, the oblation and consecration of the Eucharist, the Apostolical Succession †."

* Keble on Tradition, p. 32.

† Ibid. p. 41.

So, too, Mr. Newman. He asserts "that the unanimous tradition of the early Church authorizes us to maintain and enforce the doctrine that Christ is the Son of God, in the sense of his being consubstantial with him *."

It thus appears that among the doctrines which are stated by the Oxford divines to have obtained the almost unanimous concurrence of the early Fathers, that of the Trinity, according to its most orthodox acceptation, and that of the Apostolic Succession, stand forth as the most prominent. It is maintained that the seal of Catholic consent,—the consent of the universal Church down to the Council of Nice,—is affixed to the full doctrine of the Trinity, and the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father. This is asserted, and this assertion I take leave to deny. I deny that it is accordant with the facts related in authentic ecclesiastical history. I not only deny its correctness, but I cannot make this denial without at the same time expressing my utmost astonishment at the boldness and hardihood of those who have ventured upon the assertion. Let any one carefully and impartially examine the matter for himself, and he will find that on this very cardinal point, so far from there being a general agreement among the

* Newman's Romanism, p. 136.

primitive Christians, as is confidently asserted,—so far from its being an occasion on which the Church universal gave utterance only to one harmonious note, a thousand discordant voices were to be heard in it, and nothing like unison or concord anywhere prevailed. It is well known that one large body of Christians, those of the Jewish believers, did not hold the doctrine of the Trinity, or the Deity of Christ, in any shape. It is equally certain that many of the most distinguished of those called the Fathers held only a very modified and what would now be considered an heretical form of the doctrine. And of the common people, the great mass of Christian believers, the majority, according to Tertullian, not only rejected, but were frightened at the doctrine of the Trinity. Upon each of these three statements I shall here offer a few remarks.

1. The Jewish Christians, in the second century, were divided into two bodies, respectively known by the terms Ebionites and Nazarenes. A question has arisen whether they were not, in fact, the same people, differing only on one or two subordinate points of belief. Be this question determined as it may,—whether their general identity be established or not,—there can be no doubt that both Ebionites and Nazarenes denied the doctrine of Christ's supreme divinity. Origen states positively that all

the Jewish Christians rejected it, and in this he is joined by Epiphanius, Eusebius and others*.

2. As to the strict orthodoxy of the Ante-Nicene Fathers I will only observe here, that not only by Unitarians (their judgement in such a case might be supposed to be a partial one, and strongly biassed by their opinions)—not only by Unitarians has the contrary been maintained, but by many learned men belonging both to the Romish and English as well as to foreign Protestant churches. Petavius and Huetius among the first, and Cudworth and Whitby among the second (all men of great learning, and who had made the opinions of the Fathers their particular care and study), contend that the doctrine of Christ's divinity, as generally held in the second and third centuries, was not the same with that which was determined on by the Council of Nice.

Sandius, says the author of 'Ben Mordecai's Apology,' undertakes to prove in his 'Ecclesiastical

* Gibbon thus speaks of these two bodies of Jewish Christians: "A laudable regard for the honour of the first proselytes has countenanced the belief, the hope, the wish that the Ebionites, or at least the Nazarenes, were distinguished only by their obstinate perseverance in the practice of the Mosaic rites.....But the most charitable criticism must refuse these sectaries any knowledge of the pure and proper divinity of Christ."—*Roman Empire*, vol. vi. p. 3. See also *Lardner—Priestley's Early Opinions, and the Controversy between Priestley and Horsley*.

History' that all antiquity was Arian ; and M. Jureu, a French reformer and strongly attached to orthodox views of the Trinity, allows that the inferiority of the Son to the Father was the unanimous opinion of the ancients of the three first ages*.

Mosheim also says " that the public teachers (in the early period of Christianity of which we are now speaking) inculcated no other doctrines than those that are contained in what is commonly called the Apostles' Creed ; and, in the method of illustrating them, all vain subtilties, all mysterious researches, everything that was beyond the reach of common capacities, were carefully avoided †."

Mr. Hallam, who on such a subject may be supposed to speak without any professional or sectarian bias, and to give his opinion in accordance with the demands of strict historic truth, thus expresses himself in reference to Bishop Bull's ' Defence of the Nicene Faith': "Notwithstanding the popularity of

* Ben Mordecai's Apology, vol. i. p. 46. Moses Stuart also, an orthodox American divine, of great reputation in his own country and of considerable popularity in this, tells us, in an article on Schleiermacher in the Biblical Repository for April and July 1825, that the views of the early Fathers " do really and effectually interfere with the true equality in substance, power, and glory of the three persons or distinctions in the Godhead. The Son and Spirit, according to them, are derived beings, and derivation implies inferiority."

† Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 164.

this work and the learning it displays, the author was far from ending the controversy, or from satisfying all his readers. It was alleged that he does not meet the question with which he deals; that the word *ὁμοούσιος* (*homoousios*), being almost new at the time of the Council, and being obscure and metaphysical in itself, required a precise definition to make the reader see his way before him, or at least one better than Bull has given; that the passages adduced from the Fathers are often insufficient for his purpose; that he confounds the eternal essence with the eternal personality of the Logos; and that he does not repel some of the passages which can hardly bear an orthodox interpretation*.”

“Of the Fathers,” observes Dr. Arnold, “how are we to know who were sound? Origen, one of the ablest and most learned of them all, was anathematized by the second council of Constantinople; Tertullian was heretical during a part of his life; and Lactantius was taxed with heterodoxy†.”

This want of agreement among the Fathers would

* Hallam's *Literature of Europe*, vol. iv. p. 152. Bull's '*Defensio Fidei Nicenæ*' received a very masterly and, as many think, a complete answer in Whitby's '*Disquisitiones Modestæ*.' For a fuller statement of the opinions of the early Fathers on the subject of Christ's divinity, showing that they were not what is called orthodox, see Appendix.

† Sermons on Christian Life, p. 472.

have appeared still more striking and palpable, if those of them, called heretics, had been also designated by this term,—as they have as good a right to be as the orthodox,—and if their works had been suffered to come down to us. But as soon as the orthodox party became the dominant party, they ordered the books of the heretics to be burnt, and none of them therefore now remain. “No fact in history,” says the author of ‘Second Travels of an Irish Gentleman,’ “is better established than the regular and merciless destruction of every work which opposed the orthodox party. Punishment of death was denounced against every person in whose possession heretical books should be found. . . . The orthodox by law allowed no works to exist but those which coincided at least in some degree with their creed ; certainly none that contradicted it. This is the process which has produced the Fathers*.”

I have in a former lecture noticed the remarkable admission made by the modern high-church divines, that several of the orthodox doctrines, such as those of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ, are not plainly taught in the Scriptures. But it was said, that though not explicitly taught *there*, they were clearly announced to us by Tradition,—were

* Second Travels of an Irish Gentleman, pp. 114, 115. See also Lardner's Works, vol. iv. pp. 191, 396, and Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii. p. 444.

fully and completely exhibited and developed in the writings of the early Fathers. After this my surprise was not a little to find it stated by one of their own party and under their own sanction, "that the early Church did herself conceal these same church doctrines. Viewing that early period as a whole, there is on the whole a great secrecy observed in it concerning such doctrines as the Trinity and the Eucharist; that is, the early Church did the very thing which I have been supposing Scripture does, —conceal these high truths*."

After all that has been so boastingly said of the testimony borne by Tradition,—by the general consent of the Fathers and the early Church to orthodox doctrines, this is assuredly a most singular confession. But the design is too apparent to escape detection. Show that the Scriptures and the Fathers are full of mysterious and recondite meanings, that they do not say what on the surface they appear to say, that they are both characterized by a system of concealment and reserve, and what follows? Why, that their interpretation must be left in the hands of a privileged class. There must be oracles to consult before their meaning can be made known to the people; and through whom but the order of the priesthood can the oracular voice or judgement be delivered? They alone have

* Tracts for the Times, No. 85. p. 68.

access to the inner shrine. They alone can draw aside the mystic veil that covers it. They alone can make its light and its glory completely visible. Whether this be their meaning or not, the confession which they have made remains the same. They have acknowledged that among the doctrines which not only the Scriptures but the primitive Church, the early Fathers, have concealed, the doctrine of the Trinity is one. For this acknowledgement I was not prepared. It is a species of testimony to the fact for which I am now pleading that I confess I did not expect.

3. Having made these observations on the faith of the Jewish Christians and the state of opinion among the early Fathers, I shall now say a few words respecting the sentiments of the great body of the first Christians generally. That they were not believers in the doctrine of the Trinity, as now received, appears from the testimony, the indirect and incidental, but still clear and explicit testimony of Tertullian, Origen, and Athanasius himself.

Tertullian, who flourished about the year 200, thus writes: "Simple persons indeed, not to call them ignorant and idiots, who always make the majority of believers, because the rule of faith itself carries us away from the many gods of the heathen to the one true God,—not understanding that one God is indeed to be believed, but with an economy

(or arrangement) of the Godhead, startle at the economy. They take it for granted that the number and disposition of the Trinity is a division of the Unity. They pretend that two and even three are preached by us, and imagine that they themselves are worshippers of one God. We, say they, hold the monarchy. Latins have caught up the word *monarchia*. Greeks will not understand *œconomia* *."

This language is plain and decisive enough. Here is no ambiguity, no uncertainty. Tertullian (the most celebrated, perhaps, of the Latin Fathers) declares expressly and positively that the majority of believers in his time were frightened at the doctrine of the Trinity, contending that the Trinitarians were worshippers of two and even three

* I have given the translation of Dr. Horsley (Tracts, p. 195) as being the least liable to the charge of a too favourable construction. With the exception of rendering the word *idiotæ* idiots, I make no objection to it. But this is a translation of which a school-boy would have been ashamed. After receiving a severe castigation for it from Dr. Priestley, he explained himself (in his Supplemental Disquisitions) by saying, that he did not mean, by the word idiot, a person deficient in the faculty of reason, but a dull, stupid, ignorant person. The present Bishop of Lincoln (Dr. Kaye) gives this as the sense of the passage to which we are now referring: "The simple, indeed, not to call them unwise and unlearned, who always constitute the majority of believers, are startled at the doctrine of the Trinity, thinking that it divides the Unity."—*Ecclesiastical History illustrated from the Writings of Tertullian*, p. 531.

Gods, but that they were worshippers of one God only.

Dr. Horsley attempts to weaken or evade this strong testimony in a manner so extraordinary, that one can hardly believe him to have been in earnest. He says, “to preclude the plea of numbers, Tertullian remarks that the illiterate will always make the majority of believers*.” But because the illiterate constitute the majority of believers, how does that preclude the plea of numbers? The majority are the majority still, be they composed of the learned or the unlearned. The judgement of one enlightened man may be worth more than that of a hundred who are unenlightened, but this will not lessen the amount of the actual number that are before us. In this country, for instance, the majority of Christians are supposed to be Trinitarians; and the majority here, as elsewhere, comprise the simple and unlearned; but would any one say that the majority, being ignorant or illiterate, are therefore not the majority? The question is not as to their learning or their ignorance—the worth or worthlessness of their judgement, but whether Tertullian does not explicitly state that in his time the objectors to the doctrine of the Trinity constituted the majority of believers? That he does so is as plain as language can make it.

* Tracts in Controversy with Dr. Priestley, p. 196. ed. 1812.

LECTURE IV.

“There are,” writes Origen, “those who partake of the *logos* which was from the beginning; the *logos* that was with God and the *logos* that was God. But there are others who know nothing about Jesus Christ and him crucified, the *logos* that was made flesh, thinking that they have everything of the *logos* when they acknowledge Christ according to the flesh. Such is the multitude of those who are called Christians.” The same opinion is again expressed by him in another place:—“The multitudes of believers are instructed in the shadow of the *logos*, and not in the true *logos* of God*.”

The two parties of Christians to whom Origen here refers must have been the receivers and rejecters of the doctrine of the Trinity. There were some, he says, who admitted this doctrine, and others who did not admit it. They knew Christ only according to the flesh; probably meaning by this, that they believed him to be, as to nature, simply a human being. Of these, he adds, are the multitude (*πληθος*) of those called Christians.

There are passages in the writings of Jerome, Athanasius and others, implying the same thing. But I shall cite only that from Athanasius, which I the more readily do, because, perhaps, it will little to be expected that from such a quarrel any evidence could be gathered in favour of

* Priestley's *Early Opinions*, vol. iii. pp. 263, 264.

Unitarianism of the great body of the early Christians.

Writing against the opinions of Paul of Samosata (the learned Unitarian bishop of Antioch in the third century), Athanasius says, "It grieves those who stand up for the holy faith that the multitude (the many, τοὺς πολλοὺς), and especially persons of low understanding, should be infected with those blasphemies*." And he complains in another place that in Pentapolis of Upper Libya some of the bishops embraced the doctrine of Sabellius, and prevailed so much that the Son of God was hardly preached in the churches.

That the great body of the early Christians were opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity appears to me to be established by evidence of the most unexceptionable kind, viz. the testimony of those who lament and complain of the fact, and so let out, as it were, incidentally the secret which might otherwise have remained unknown. According to Tertullian the Unitarians were the majority of believers, '*major pars credentium.*' According to Origen they were the multitude, 'πλῆθος'; and according to Athanasius they were the 'οἱ πολλοί,' the many.

Should it be asked why, in discoursing on Tradition, so much is said about the opinions of the first Christians, and of the early Fathers in relation

* Priestley's Early Opinions, vol. iii. p. 269.

to the doctrine of the Trinity, my answer is, because this particular doctrine is selected and pointed out as pre-eminently the doctrine of Tradition. Here, it is said, we have a striking instance of the value and importance of Vincent's rule, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*. The conditions, required by this rule, of Antiquity, Universality, Catholicity, are amply fulfilled in the doctrine of the Trinity. It was taught always, everywhere, and by all. To this I say, no—it was not the faith of the Jewish Christians. It was not, in the strict orthodox sense, the faith of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. It was not the faith of the great body of the Gentile believers. For so saying I have given my reasons, and hence the foregoing observations on the state of opinion in the first ages. Allow as much latitude as can be allowed to the terms in which the above-mentioned rule is expressed, it still utterly fails in its application to the doctrine in question*. I will now mention one other in-

* It is sometimes argued in favour of the universal reception in the first ages of the doctrine of the Trinity, or at least of the proper Deity of Christ, that, in the discussions which took place on this subject, the orthodox alleged for it the authority of apostolical tradition. Undoubtedly they did; but did not the heterodox party do the same? Certainly they did. We have then tradition opposed to tradition; and if the works of the heretical Fathers had been spared—if they had not, when their opponents became armed with political power, been ruthlessly destroyed, it might have been seen perhaps that they had better grounds

stance in which its failure is equally signal and complete.

That Episcopacy (as now understood) is a divine institution, and episcopal ordination a necessary channel for the conveyance of divine grace, is of the very essence of the Anglo-Catholic system. For this also the authority of Tradition is strongly insisted on. The consent of the universal Church is here said to be expressed clearly and unequivocally. Episcopacy bears upon it, most conspicuously, this mark or designation of its divine character. So we are told; but a little examination with our own eyes shows us that there is no truth in this assertion,—that Tradition itself tells a different tale,—and that so far from the Church, that is, the great body of professing Christians being unanimous in *for their* tradition than the orthodox for *theirs*. Jeremy Taylor tells us, “that this pretence, viz. that of tradition, the Arians themselves made, and desired to be tried by the Fathers of the first three hundred years, but that this trial was sometime declined by that excellent man St. Athanasius, although at other times confidently and truly pretended.....The heretic Artemon (he was a Unitarian of the second century) having observed the advantage that might be taken by any sect that would pretend tradition,—because the medium was plausible and consisting of so many particulars that it was hard to be redargued,—pretended a tradition from the apostles that Christ was *ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος* (simply a man), and that the tradition did descend by a constant succession in the Church of Rome to Pope Victor’s time, and till Zephyrinus corrupted the doctrine.”—*Liberty of Prophecy*, pp. 118, 119. See also *Lardner*.

its favour, several of the most eminent of the early Christian writers declare (as I have stated in a former lecture) that Bishop and Presbyter were originally the same, that for some time afterwards the bishop was merely the presiding presbyter, and that ordination by presbyters was reckoned a perfectly good and valid ordination.

Now here are two of the leading doctrines of the orthodox system, resting mainly, it is said, on the authority of tradition, the consent of the universal Church, which, when we come to investigate the matter, is found to have no such support to sustain them. Tradition does not say that either the one or the other,—that either the doctrine of Episcopacy as now held, or that of the Trinity, was universally received, or that the Church of Christ spoke only one voice upon the subject. This test therefore fails in the especial instances for which its utility and sufficiency are so greatly extolled.

But this is not all. There is yet another and stronger objection to be advanced against it—against the application made of it by the Oxford divines. For tradition not only gives them no help where help is most needed, but, in many instances where its assistance might be obtained, and where it would be found to be most availing, there—*for the present at least*—it is by them neglected and abandoned.

These men of the Oxford school perfectly amaze one by their extravagant assumptions and egregious inconsistencies. They take of Tradition just what they please, and leave what they please. The consent of the universal Church, they tell us, is a good plea for the doctrine of the Trinity (though, in fact, no such consent *was* given), but the consent of the primitive Church is no sufficient authority for the celibacy of the clergy*, the monastic institute or the popular election of bishops.

Among the earliest and best authenticated traditions which have been transmitted to us, may be mentioned that of the Millenium†, of demonology, the lengthened age of Christ, and the sanctity of a solitary and ascetic life. As to demonology, the early Church was full of it. Every child was thought to be possessed by an evil spirit before it was baptized,

* I am happy to find myself supported in this course of argument by Mr. Hallam, who observes, "that nothing can come so close to the foolish rule above mentioned (that of Vincent) as the observation of celibacy by bishops and priests, not being married before their ordination, which, till the time of Luther, was, as far as we have reason to believe, universal in the Church.....Yet those who talk most of the rule of Vincentius Lirinensis, set aside without compunction the only case in which we can truly say that it may with some share of probability be applied."—*Literature of Europe*, vol. iii. p. 76, note.

† This doctrine is expressly taught by Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Origen, Lactantius and others. Justin Martyr asserts in his dialogue with Trypho, that it was the belief of all orthodox Christians.

and it was decreed therefore that exorcism should precede baptism. If then the unanimity or the general agreement of the early Fathers is to be alleged in proof of the truth of any opinion or doctrine, it would follow, that all those monstrous doctrines or practices just spoken of are to be received as true and obligatory, since it may be shown that on no other points was there so great a concurrence of sentiment among them, or so general a consent of the whole Church, as on these. But why, if Tradition holds good in one case, why should it not in the other? That, of two doctrines or ceremonies standing precisely on the same ground, we should be at liberty to admit one and reject the other, is, I confess, a proceeding the justice and propriety of which my intellectual optics are not keen enough to discern. We have now seen then what may be gained from Tradition—as far as it can be collected out of the writings of the Fathers,—how little there is that can be depended upon, and how much that is inconsistent and discordant. Well might Jortin say that Antiquity, sometimes called the handmaid to Scripture, is like Briareus and has a hundred hands, and these hands often clash and beat one another*.

From the Fathers I pass on to say a few words on the assemblies, called Councils. Does the voice of

* Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. p. 75, ed. 1805.

the Church speak more harmoniously through them? **Are they** the sure organs of delivering to us those doctrines only which have received the stamp of Catholic or universal consent? Are their decisions and decrees authoritative and infallible? So, it seems, some high-church divines would have us believe. But why? What is to guarantee their infallibility? Is truth to be determined by numbers, by the votes of a majority, even though it be composed of bishops? "It was never heard of in any profession," says John Hales of Eton, "that conclusion of truth went by plurality of voices, the Christian profession alone excepted; and I have often mused how it came to pass that the way, which, in all other sciences is not able to warrant the poorest conclusion, should be thought sufficient to give authority in divinity." But we need not dwell on such general views as these, for the same argument that has been urged against the authority of the Fathers may be directed with equal force and effect against the authority of Councils. In this case, as in that, Chillingworth's objection is perfectly valid. As there are Fathers against Fathers, so there are Councils against Councils.

To give even a brief account of the different Councils that were called together in the first four or five centuries,—to show how the decisions of one were opposed to those of another,—how, what to-

day was decreed to be orthodox, was to-morrow decreed to be heterodox,—to put you in possession of all the disgusting details attendant upon these meetings, would far exceed the limits within which I must necessarily confine myself. My purpose, however, will be sufficiently answered by a few observations on what is called the first general or œcumenical council, viz. that of Nice, and one or two others that were held soon afterwards.

Various opinions are entertained among high-church divines as to what councils, and how many, should be accounted general, and received as authoritative expositors of the Catholic faith. Some are for the first six—others for no more than the first four*; but all seem to be agreed as to the pre-eminence and authority of the Council of Nice. Though there had been many councils assembled before, this is considered to have been the first that is entitled to the appellation of ‘general or œcumenical.’ As the Christian community had been for some time agitated with fierce and incessant disputes about the nature of Christ, a synod of bishops was summoned to meet at Nice in the year 325, by command of the Emperor Constantine, for the purpose, if possible, of terminating the Arian controversy.

At this celebrated council, where about three

* The Roman Catholics reckon as many as eighteen.

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hundred bishops were come together, Arius was condemned and sentenced to banishment ; his doctrines were pronounced to be heretical ; Christ was declared to be of the same substance (homooousios) with the Father, and the Creed, well known by the name of the Nicene Creed, was then affirmed to be the faith of the Church. Of this creed, Mr. Palmer says, that “ it is to be accounted an irrefragable, unalterable rule, which cannot be disputed without heresy, and for which, as the Egyptian synod wrote, ‘ we should be ready even to lay down our lives *.’ ” Respecting this and other so-called general councils, I must here observe that there probably never was assembled a general council in the strict and proper meaning of the word. They were, for the most part, called together under the influence of emperors or popes, and confined to the Roman empire. Certainly this noted Council of Nice has no particular claim to the denomination of a general council. It was in fact a council of the Oriental Church alone, the Spanish Bishop Hosius and two Roman presbyters being the only ecclesiastics from the West by whom it was attended†.

* Palmer on the Church, vol. ii. p. 132.

† Riddle's Antiquities of the Christian Church, p. 227. While this sheet is passing through the press I have received from my excellent friend the Rev. G. E. Ellis of Charlestown, near Boston, a valuable sermon entitled ‘ the Bible or the Church,’ in which I find the following passage, showing, by a few clear and emphatic

Of the bishops who composed this council and of their general character and conduct, it may be well for us to observe what is said by various competent judges. "Sabinus, bishop of Heraclea in Thrace, in his 'Collectio Conciliorum,' writes that the bishops who met together at Nice and formed the Creed were *imperiti, rudes, inscii, indocti, omniumque rerum ignari*,—without skill, or experience, or knowledge, or learning, and ignorant of all things. Petavius calls them rude and illiterate. Archbishop Wake speaks of the violence, the passion, the malice, the falsehood, the oppression, which reigned in most of the synods held by Constantine the First, and after him by the following emperors, on occasion of the Arian controversy. And Sir Isaac Newton observes, that as soon as the empire became Christian, the Roman emperors began to call general councils out of the provinces; and by prescribing to them what points they should consider, and influencing them by their interest and power, they set up what party they pleased *."

statements, how little pretension the Council of Nice has to the title 'general':—"The habitable part of Africa, then crowded and as large as the whole of Asia Minor, and which, says Bingham (the great episcopal annalist), had at that time nearly seven hundred bishops, sent only *one* to the council. All Spain sent but *one*. All Gaul or France sent but *one*. Rome *had not* even *one*." And yet, as if in defiance of common sense and the common meaning of the simplest words, it is contended that the Council of Nice was still a *general* council.

* Ben Mordecai's Apology, vol. ii. p. 1024—1026.

But did the decrees of this council restore peace to the Church and establish uniformity of belief? Nothing like it. The Church continued as much divided as ever, and the Arian controversy, instead of being laid to rest, was roused into stronger and fiercer activity than before. Sometimes one party prevailed, sometimes another. Council was arrayed against council, and anathema was hurled against anathema. All was discord and confusion. "The East and the West," said Hilary (who lived in the middle of the fourth century), "are in a perpetual state of restlessness and disturbance. Deserting our spiritual charges; abandoning the people of God; neglecting the preaching of the Gospel; we are hurried about from place to place, sometimes to great distances, some of us infirm with age, with feeble constitutions or ill-health, and are sometimes obliged to leave our sick brethren on the road*."

It was only ten years after the Council of Nice that a council was held at Tyre, where Athanasius appeared at the head of forty Egyptian bishops. But notwithstanding that he came attended by so many followers, he was treated as a criminal and sentence of deposition was pronounced against him. At the expiration of another ten years the Council of Sardica met, consisting of ninety-four bishops of

* Milman's History of Christianity, vol. iii. p. 45.

the West, and seventy-six of the East. These two parties, not agreeing, separated and formed two rival synods, who, as Gibbon remarks, hereupon hurled their spiritual thunders against their enemies. A few years further on two more councils decided in favour of Arianism, or Semi-Arianism, viz. one at Antioch and the other at Ariminum (Rimini). At the last of these no fewer than four hundred bishops were present,—some say six hundred,—and if numbers can entitle a council to be called ‘general,’ this was undoubtedly more of a general council than that which assembled at Nice. As Bishop Jeremy Taylor observes, “The Arian councils were convened by that authority which all the world knows did at that time convocate councils, and by which (as is notorious) the first eight generals did meet; that is, by the authority of the Emperor all were called, and as many or more did come to *them* than came to the most famous Council of Nice*.” Bellarmine also admits that the council at Ariminum was a general council. Many others, besides those which I have mentioned, were held in the course of the fourth century,—some deciding for the orthodox party, and some for the heterodox,—but giving, with close approximation to the truth, as the total result, about forty councils, of which more than one-half

* Liberty of Prophesying, p. 151.

were in favour of Arian or Semi-Arian opinions. Then, says Vincentius Lirinensis, the poison of Arianism defiled not only a small part, but almost all the whole world. And Austin likewise declares that the professors of error surpassed the numbers of the professors of the truth as the sands of the sea do the stars of heaven*.

And yet we are told that what is called the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity obtained the general consent of the Church,—was the doctrine always, everywhere, and by all received,—that from the first it bore the inscription of Antiquity, Universality, Catholicity†! Alas! where will prejudice carry us, and to what extent will it blind us?

From the representations of Dr. Pusey, Mr. Newman, Mr. Palmer, and other divines of the same school, you would be led to suppose that down to the Nicene age there reigned in the Church nothing but peace and harmony, there being little or no discordance as to doctrine, and little or no corruption in practice. Very different, however, from

* Ben Mordecai's Apology, vol. ii. p. 1007.

† "It is a very great mercy," says one of the Tractarians, "that the Church Catholic over the world, as descended from the apostles, does at this day speak one and the same doctrine about the Trinity and Incarnation *as it has always spoken*. This majestic evidence, however, does not extend to any but to the articles of the Creed, especially those relating to the Trinity and Incarnation."—*Tract* 71. p. 28.

this is the real state of the case, as you will see from the facts which I shall now place before you. Dr. Middleton has observed that learned men have reckoned about ninety different heresies which all sprang up within the first three centuries. "Who knows not," says Bishop Jewel, "what a number of heresies arose when the Gospel was first propagated in the world in the times of the very apostles? Who, before those times, ever heard of Simon Magus, Menander, Saturninus, Basilides, Carpocrates, Cerinthus, Ebion, Valentinus, Secundus and others? But why should I mention this contemptible number? Epiphanius reckons eighty, and Augustine *more*, distinct heresies which grew up with the Gospel." Notwithstanding all this, there are those who talk much of the unanimity of faith which, according to them, characterized the Christian community in the first four centuries. This, too, it is said, was the era of the Church's purity. "The termination of the era of purity," observes Mr. Newman, "cannot be fixed much earlier than the Council of Sardica, A.D. 347*." The period extending from the end of the first to the middle of the fourth century, *the era of purity!* To what lengths will this exaggeration—this lavish extravagance of assertion go? In making such statements as these, the Puseyite divines must presume largely

* Newman's Romanism, p. 253.

upon the ignorance or credulity of their readers. As to the boasted purity and perfection of the Ante-Nicene church, Mr. Isaac Taylor (the author of the 'Natural History of Enthusiasm') contends that it is an entire mistake. He has written a long and elaborate work, under the title of 'Ancient Christianity,' in proof of this. He says, that having read all the Greek and Latin Fathers, he considers himself qualified to give an opinion on this matter. This opinion he delivers in these words: "There is absolutely nothing in the ripe popery of St. Dominic (certain elaborate modes of proceeding excepted) which is not to be found in the Christianity of the times of Cyprian and Tertullian. . . . I boldly say that Popery, foul as it is and has ever been in the mass, might yet fairly represent itself as a reform upon early Christianity*."

There is one important consequence, it is alleged, resulting from this rejection of the authority of tradition which it becomes me to notice, and which I will endeavour to do as shortly as I can. It is said, then, if you distrust the testimony and the judgement of the Fathers in respect to one class of facts, you detract from the weight of their testimony in other matters. But how, without their testimony, can you establish the authenticity of the gospels for instance? Do you not get at

* As quoted in the Christian Examiner, vol. xxviii. p. 258.

the knowledge of the antiquity and general reception of the Christian Scriptures by means of tradition*? You say that the four gospels existed and were generally received as authentic documents as early as the beginning or middle of the second century, that is, within little more than fifty years of the death of the last of the apostles. It may be so, but how do you prove it? How, but by the assertion of those very Fathers whose credit, as

* "I have been engaged," writes one of the authors of the 'Tracts for the Times,' "in showing that the canon of Scripture rests on no other foundation than the Catholic doctrines—that those who dispute the latter should, if they were consistent, dispute the former; that in both cases we believe mainly, because the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries unanimously believed."—*Tract* 85. p. 102.

Mr. Newman (*Romanism*, p. 350) also says, "I suppose it is undeniable after all that we *do* receive the New Testament in its existing shape on Tradition." Most certainly, I should say, we do not. Tradition and testimony are perfectly distinct sources of evidence. There is not a juryman in this country, possessed of a little common sense, who, in judging of a cause, would not readily distinguish the one from the other. To confound them together—to make testimony the same as tradition, is doing grievous wrong to the argument in favour of the authenticity of the Christian Scriptures, arising from the fact that they were known, seen, read and abundantly cited by Christian writers of the second and third centuries. What wretched nonsense therefore (for I cannot give it a more appropriate name) is it to say, that we believe it because the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries believed it! But the question is more fully considered in the text, to which, therefore, the reader's attention is particularly directed.

faithful narrators, you have been endeavouring to undermine. If you reject their testimony in the one instance, why do you admit it in the other? Because, I answer, there is an essential difference between the two kinds of testimony. I know that it is common to confound them, and it may answer the views of certain parties to do so, but they are clearly and manifestly distinct, both in their own nature and in the impression which they leave upon the mind. The Fathers (that is, the early Christian writers) bear witness to the existence and wide circulation, in their day, of certain books under certain names or titles. But how is this witness borne? Not simply by saying that so it had been reported to them by Tradition. If this had been all, it would not, I admit, have amounted to much. But it is a great deal more than this; for they not only say that they had heard of certain books being in existence, but that they themselves had seen and read them; and as evidence of this fact, their own writings contain long and numerous quotations from them. These quotations also, made by so many different hands and in various parts of the world, are found substantially to agree with one another, thereby proving that they are drawn from a common source. They cite passages from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; and Irenæus, one of the earliest of the Fathers,

assigns certain reasons why there should be four gospels, and only four. These reasons are fanciful and foolish enough, but with his fancies or his reasons we have nothing to do, except to show that they are evidence of the fact for which they were invented to account. Testimony and Tradition, then, are not to be confounded. They have essentially distinct characters.

Take, as an illustration of this, what may be supposed to pass in a court of justice. Proof is required, say, of the existence of certain manuscripts at a certain distant period, and of their identity with one another, not only as to their general import but as to their exact language. The first witness who is called can say no more than that he has heard that such was really the fact. He has been told so. It was a common rumour. Beyond this he knows nothing. Another witness then steps forward, and he testifies to having actually seen and handled one of these manuscripts with his own hands. This is a considerable step towards establishing the point desired. Still of itself it is not conclusive. He may have been mistaken, or he may intend to deceive. Upon this, other witnesses are summoned to appear, and they too, though coming from different and distant countries, declare that they had personal knowledge of manuscripts of the kind described. Of course

this vastly increases the probability in favour of the thing required. But if, in addition to this, these various witnesses could produce works written by themselves and sent abroad into the world some time back, in which long and numerous passages are introduced as quotations from these manuscripts, all of which, bearing the same designation, substantially agree with one another, the evidence for the actual existence and wide circulation of the writings in question and at the period mentioned would rise to the highest pitch, and no room for doubt or suspicion could possibly be left. But who will say that this last species of testimony is to be put in the same category with the hearsay testimony to which reference was first made? And yet the Oxford divines *do* say so, when they affirm that the authenticity of the books of the New Testament rests upon tradition—the same tradition to which they are in the habit of appealing for the truth and reality of their church nursery tales.

Parallel to the supposed case above described is that of the Christian records. The testimony borne to *their* existence at a certain period, under certain titles or designations, is precisely the same as in the instance of which we have been speaking. So many are the witnesses that present themselves, and so long and numerous are the quotations out of the New Testament which their writings contain, that did we possess nothing more than these, they

would, if collected together and properly arranged, very nearly make up the whole four gospels exactly as we now have them. Assuredly this is something very different from what is commonly understood and designated by the term Tradition. No one can reasonably doubt that when Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen composed their works, the books of the New Testament were then in existence, and widely circulated under the names which they now bear. For passages are quoted from them so often, and they are so mixed up with the train of thought, the subject-matter of their writings, that the supposition of their being subsequently foisted in is inadmissible even for a moment. The testimony given by them to the existence, in their day, of the New Testament, together with its extensive diffusion and general reception as the work of evangelists and apostles, is as clear, strong, and satisfactory as human testimony can well be.

Having made these observations on the nature and authority of Tradition, I wish, before I conclude, to say, that in noticing, as I have sometimes done, the absurd extravagancies and contemptible puerilities chargeable upon those ancient Christian writers called the Fathers, it is not because I have had any pleasure in such an exposure*, but because

* "Wherever," says Milton, "I have laid open the faults and blemishes of Fathers, martyrs, or Christian emperors, or have otherwise inveighed against error and superstition with vehement

it was necessary in order to lay bare the almost unaccountable infatuation of those who hold them up as our spiritual guides and instructors, and demand for them a reverential attention and deference due only to those who speak to us as the authorized and commissioned servants of Almighty God. While we cannot but acknowledge that the gross absurdities of opinion into which they fell, and the silly fanciful expositions of Scripture in which they indulged, afford ample evidence of the weakness of their judgements and the credulity of their understandings, large allowance must be made for them on account of the times and circumstances on which their lives were cast. Brought up, as most of them had been, in the principles of a degrading polytheism, it could scarcely be expected that on embracing Christianity they should all at once be emancipated from its errors and follies, or that they would not carry into their new faith some-

expressions ; I have done it neither out of malice, nor list to speak evil, nor any vain glory, but of mere necessity to vindicate the spotless truth from an ignominious bondage, whose native worth is now become of such a low esteem, that she is like to find small credit with us for what she can say, unless she can bring a ticket from Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley, or prove herself a retainer to Constantine and wear his badge. More tolerable were it for the Church of God that all these names were utterly abolished like the brazen serpent, than that men's fond opinion should thus idolize them, and the heavenly truth be thus captivated."—*Prose Works*, p. 3. ed. 1838.

thing of the leaven of their old creed. In whatever way we may account for the state of things existing in the first ages of Christianity, and whatever apology on this ground may be made for the class of writers we are now speaking of, it presents no reason for the peculiar veneration* with which we are asked to regard them, and the unquestioning submission which we are urged to yield to them.

“There are some,” says Jeremy Taylor, “who think that they can determine all questions by two or three sayings of the Fathers, or by the consent of so many as they please to call a concurrent testimony; but this consideration will soon be at an end; for if the Fathers do not always speak truth, as it happened in the case of Papias and his numerous followers, then is their testimony more improbable when they dispute or write commentaries†.”

The great advantage to be derived from the Fathers is, that they give us in their writings a

* When occasion offers, the high-church divines can treat the Fathers with as little ceremony as any one. Witness the conduct of Bishop Horsley, who, when pressed with the weight of Origen's testimony against some point for which he was contending, made no scruple of charging this, the most learned and celebrated of the Fathers, with the guilt of wilful falsehood.—See *Horsley's Tracts in Controversy with Dr. Priestley*, p. 173. Dundee, ed. 1812.

† Liberty of Prophesying, p. 215.

picture of the times in which they lived,—that they make us acquainted with the state and condition of the primitive Christian Church,—that they tell us of the opinions and practices that prevailed in the early ages, and above all, that they furnish us with most satisfactory evidence of the existence of the books of the New Testament at such a period of the Christian era as to render it almost impossible for them, widely diffused as they were, to have been forged and palmed upon the world, in so short a time, as the genuine writings of apostles and apostolic men. This view of the subject accords with that of the present learned Bishop of Lincoln. He says, “the principal value of the writings of the Fathers consists, perhaps, in the testimony which they bear to the authenticity of the books of the New Testament *.” As to anything more than this, I believe, they are not only without value, but oftentimes positively pernicious. By their “vain babbling,” their spiritualizing and allegorizing perversions of Scripture, they so perplex and bewilder the understandings of those who give themselves up to the study of their writings, that reason and good sense lose all their just authority and controul, and feeling and fancy alone bear sway. Hence we see in the works of the Puseyite or Oxford divines

* Account of the Writings and Opinions of Justin Martyr, . 133.

the same want of judgement and discrimination, the same love of the marvellous and the mystical, the same fondness for extravagances and conceits, which characterize those to whom they so reverentially look up as their leaders and guides. If, with singleness of mind, and casting off the yoke of creeds and systems of man's device, they would direct their attention more to the words of Christ and his apostles, and less to those of councils and Fathers, their learning and accomplishments would, I humbly conceive, redound more to their own honour and credit, as well as to the instruction and improvement of their fellow-men.

LECTURE V.

THE claims of tradition and the authority of the Fathers were the subjects treated of in my last lecture. I there endeavoured to show the fallacy and unsoundness of the pretensions set up for them by the advocates of high-church principles. In speaking of the Fathers, and for the purpose of enabling you to form some judgement of the deference said to be due to them, I was led to bring under your notice a few specimens of the weakness and credulity, the gross absurdities and the monstrous extravagances by which their writings are distinguished, and which prove them to be deficient in all those qualities which would entitle them to our confidence and reliance. They deliver to us, as venerable traditions of the Church, tales which are utterly unworthy of the slightest attention, and some of which are in direct opposition to the statements contained in the gospels themselves. Their expositions and interpretations of Scripture are often so exceedingly childish and contemptible, that one wonders how any man in his sober mind could for

a moment have entertained them, and still more that such expositions should now be received with approbation and favour, and the authors of them be held up as the best lights and guides to the attainment of Christian truth. It is said, indeed, in explanation, that it is not their individual judgment and opinion—it is not what they singly and separately affirm, that claims our implicit acquiescence and assent—it is their unanimous declaration, their united voice ; that is, it is the testimony of the Catholic or universal Church which is to be taken as a sure mark of certainty and truth. Without admitting the justness of this rule, it was replied, that no such united voice is to be heard,—that no such general testimony is to be discovered ; that, on the contrary, abundant evidence is to be found in the earliest periods of the Christian Church of great divisions and differences among its members, and that as to anything like general unanimity or agreement, it nowhere existed, except upon those points* before mentioned, and which, for the pre-

* Such as the celibacy of the clergy, the doctrine of the Millennium, the sanctity of an ascetic or solitary life, and the practice of exorcism. On these matters there was a nearer approach in the early Church to unanimity of opinion than on almost any other points, if we except those few great facts and principles which are believed by all who call themselves Christians, heterodox as well as orthodox, but for the truth of which tradition is never appealed to, and the reception of which, without the ac-

sent at least, are rejected or disallowed by the high-church party themselves *. Even with respect to customs and usages, which, generally speaking, are more easily handed down by tradition than doctrines or opinions,—even with respect to these, the Christians of the first ages were by no means agreed. As early as the second century a controversy arose about the time of observing the festival of Easter, the churches in Asia taking one side of the question, and those in Europe another; and so great was the importance attached to it, and so bitter the animosity excited by it, that at length Victor, Bishop of Rome, actually proceeded to the severe extremity of excommunicating the Asiatic churches for their disagreement with him upon this point. Now if, with respect to a custom or practice of this kind, and at the distance of little more than a hundred years from its original institution, no unanimity prevailed in the early Christian Church, how can we trust the recorded traditions

companiment of those other doctrines peculiarly termed orthodox, and for which the authority of tradition is appealed to, would not even entitle a man, in the estimation of the Oxford divines, to the name of Christian.

* “That,” says Hallam, “which came nearest, both in antiquity and in evidence of Catholic reception, to the name of apostolical, were doctrines and usages rejected alike by all denominations of the Church in modern times.”—*Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, vol. iii. p. 76.

of the Fathers of a still later age, and when they relate, not to usages or practices, but to opinions and doctrines?

In the New Testament itself we have a singular example of the manner in which a statement or an expression may be so distorted by tradition as to make it wear in a short time a totally different aspect from what it originally bore. The instance to which I allude will be found towards the conclusion of John's gospel. We there read that "Peter, seeing John, said to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus said unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went abroad this saying among the brethren that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die, but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Now if John had not corrected the error, which began to be spread among the brethren, this false tradition would, most probably, have been handed down to us as a true one,—it would have figured away among the "*piè credibilia*" delivered to us by the Fathers; and not only so, but in all likelihood additions would have been made to it, and we should have been told, perhaps, that the intimation or prediction contained in the words of our Lord was actually fulfilled, and that the apostle John was still alive on the earth, In fact this very

tradition, whose misrepresentation of what Christ said was corrected by John himself, is stated to have given rise to the legend of the wandering Jew *, so easily does one fable beget and sustain another.

The appeal to Tradition, as I observed in the last lecture, is no new thing. It was much in vogue with some of the early Fathers, especially Papias and Irenæus ; and I will now add, that it was a practice of a date still older. In the time of Christ it was held in high estimation by the Jews. It was not to “the Law and the Testimony” only that they were in the habit of referring ; they looked also, if not chiefly, to the traditions of the elders. On them they relied as their main stay and support. But what was the judgement which our Lord pronounced on the force and value of such an authority ? What did he think of it, and how did he speak of it ? We read in the gospel of Matthew, that when the Scribes and Pharisees came, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders ? Jesus answered the question, just as a sound and consistent Protestant would now answer a like interrogation from a Catholic or Anglo-Catholic divine : “ Why do you transgress the commandments of God by your traditions ? ” And the same rebuke is repeated on

* Aspland's Sermons, p. 270.

another occasion. Jesus told the Pharisees plainly, as we may plainly say to some modern high-church men, “Ye have made the commandments of God of none effect by your traditions.”

If then we are not to trust to Tradition ; if we are not to look in this direction in order to be instructed in the faith once delivered to the saints, the only other sure source of information to which we can turn is that contained in the Scriptures. In the books of the New Testament alone is to be found a trustworthy record of the life and conversation of Christ,—of all that he said and did,—of his labours and sufferings, of his death and resurrection,—and of the efforts, happily the successful efforts, of the apostles in diffusing far and wide the glad tidings of his gospel. But having these, says the genuine Protestant, we have all that is needed. They are all-sufficient for the purpose of making us acquainted with the great truths of Christianity ; with the mind and character of Christ ; with the principles, the spirit, and the genius of his religion. If we cannot learn from the New Testament all that is essential and necessary to make a man wise unto salvation ; if, from this source, we cannot derive an adequate knowledge of all that Christ taught as most important to be believed, then there are no other authentic documents to which we can have recourse, and in which such knowledge is to be

found. If it exists anywhere, it exists in the writings of those who were his immediate followers and attendants. There, then, we shall seek it, and there, —notwithstanding what the pretended successors of the apostles may say to the contrary,—there we hope to find it. We shall not refuse the aid to be derived from the judgement and learning of others, in our endeavours to discover the true meaning of what has been revealed. We shall be grateful for, and shall cordially welcome,—come from whatever quarter it may,—all the light which may guide our minds to the true sense, to the right understanding of the sacred book. But in that book alone, we say, are contained the law and the testimony, and no other writings will we acknowledge as of co-ordinate authority with them ; as possessing similar claims upon our attention and reverence.

This is what we mean by the sufficiency of Scripture. In contending for that sufficiency, it is not meant that Scripture alone should be read and studied, and that we should throw aside every means,—that we should despise and reject every help, that might enable us more correctly to ascertain its meaning, and more fully to enter into its spirit. This would be a monstrous perversion, a most pernicious abuse of the maxim, “ that the Bible only is the religion of Protestants.” All that is to be understood by it is, that no other work

carries with it the same title to our regard and submission, and that when once its principles are clearly ascertained, they furnish the only authoritative rule for Christian faith and practice ; that no other writings, of whatever age or country they may be, can be allowed to come into competition with them,—to qualify their statements or to supersede their authority ; that on every question, where they speak positively and explicitly, their decision is paramount and final ; and that no opinion or practice, unsanctioned by them, is to be received as a necessary and essential part of the Christian scheme. The works of the Fathers may be consulted by those who have the necessary requirements for doing so, as may be the works of any other man, for the purpose of gaining such information as is likely to contribute to the illustration and explanation of obscure and difficult passages. But more than this they must not be allowed to exact from us. In themselves they have no pretensions, as already shown, to peculiar deference and regard. The advantage, the use of them, consists not in their own intrinsic, independent excellence and worth, but in the help they may occasionally afford towards a better understanding of the language of Scripture. As subsidiary to this purpose we should avail ourselves of whatever assistance they are able to render us.

As far as they may conduce to such a result it behoves us to value and respect them ; but the moment they are called in as independent judges, as authoritative expounders of Christian truth, as rival claimants with the apostles upon our attention and obedience, we put them away from us, saying, “ Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who are ye ? ”

They, who look upon the Scriptures as of themselves insufficient to give us an accurate knowledge of what Christianity is, and who say that for this purpose we must have recourse to the traditions of the Church, as treasured up in the writings of the Fathers, seem to me to labour under a total misapprehension of the nature, intention and spirit of the Gospel. That is not a code of laws—of minute regulations and specific observances, like the Mosaic institute. It is not a system of doctrines elaborately wrought out into a series of distinct propositions, and then demanding our implicit assent. It does not consist of a vast number of positive commands and prohibitions, applicable to all the varying circumstances and exigencies of the human condition. It is a manifestation of truth and grace,—a revelation of a few great general principles which should serve as a beacon-light to guide us safely through our earthly pilgrimage,—an exhibition of the character and will of God as dis-

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played and exemplified in the life and actions of Jesus Christ. Instead of presenting us with a long catalogue of the things to be done and the things not to be done, it aims, after enunciating one or two fundamental truths as the basis of its instruction, to imbue us with the very spirit of duty—with the vital quickening breath of genuine piety—with the life and soul of pure religion ; and, for this purpose, places before us the character of Christ as the most complete and perfect pattern of all true greatness and goodness. Christianity lays down a few cardinal principles for the regulation of our conduct, and leaves them to be expanded and applied, as conscience dictates, in all the situations and circumstances in which we can be placed. In the New Testament, therefore, we have all that is needed or required. We have a clear statement of those truths concerning God and man, concerning our duty and our destiny, that are necessary for our guidance, support, comfort, and hope. We have them not only authoritatively announced, but strikingly and beautifully illustrated in the conduct of him who was sent to announce them. They exist not in idea merely—in notions or abstractions. In Christ they are personified. In him they live and breathe. Through him they not only speak to our intellects, but address our sympathies and find a way to our hearts. The spirit and purpose of the

Gospel, then, are clearly before us. They could not be more so by any additions that might possibly be made to the Evangelical records. What we have to do is to fulfill that purpose and to imbibe that spirit, bearing in mind the memorable language of our Saviour, that it is the letter that killeth and that the spirit maketh alive.

The nature of Christianity, however, it may be said, is to be learnt from the contents of a certain book, the language of which is often obscure and difficult to be understood, and not fit therefore to be left to every man's individual judgement to interpret as he may please. The Roman Catholic asserts, that in *his* church there is lodged, either in the pope or ecclesiastical councils, a power of infallibly determining the true sense of Scripture, and that all private judgement, therefore, is not only perfectly needless, but positively criminal and injurious,—it being the duty of the Christian believer to receive with ready and unquestioning acquiescence whatever this power may proclaim to be Christian truth. The Tractarian divines hold very much the same language. They tell us to obey, not indeed the pope or the councils alone, but the voice of the universal Church, of which voice they are the appointed official organs*. We are not to determine for ourselves, either what

* See Lecture I. p. 32.

Scripture says or what the Church says, but we are to learn the one from the other, and both from the clergy. Most certainly, if it can be shown that any one man, or that any body of men are gifted with infallibility,—that the judgement, in any case, pronounced by them *must* be right, there is no presumption in asking me to yield unhesitatingly to their decisions. But that, since the time of Christ, such a property has been lodged in any one individual or number of individuals, there is not an atom of evidence to prove. Some tell us that it is possessed by the pope; others that it resides with certain ecclesiastical councils; and others that it belongs to the Church universal. This last is the ground taken by the Oxford divines*. They say, our faith rests not on the judgement of this man or that, not on the decrees of this council or the other, but on the judgement, the consent of the Catholic or universal Church.

“We do not,” they observe, “set up the Church against Scripture, but we make her the keeper and interpreter of Scripture. . . . The Church Catholic

* “Whosoever the Church of God is certainly cognizable; when she has a clear, certain, single form or body; when she acts œcumenically by councils; speaks uniformly and without diversity in her doctors, then the peculiar promise of the Holy Spirit of God to lead her into all truth guarantees the essential certainty of her teaching, and invests her decisions with full and divine authority.”—*British Critic*, No. 50. p. 256.

is not only bound to teach the truth, but she is ever divinely guided to teach it ; her witness of the Christian faith is a matter of promise as well as of duty. She is indefectible in it, and not only has authority to enforce, but is of authority in declaring it. . . . The Church not only transmits the faith by human means, but has a supernatural gift for that purpose*.”

I know not that I could suggest a better answer to these statements than is contained in the following objections which Mr. Newman has himself mentioned, in a subsequent part of the same work from which the foregoing passage is extracted, as likely to be urged against him : “ You speak of the Catholic Church, of the Church’s teaching, and of obedience to the Church. What is meant by the Church Catholic at this day ? Where is she ? What are her local instruments and organs ? How does she speak ? When and where does she teach, forbid, command, censure ? How can she be said to utter one and the same doctrine everywhere when we are at war with all the rest of Christendom, and not at peace at home† ? ”

These questions, fairly and forcibly put as they are, one would have thought, Mr. Newman was bound to answer. But this he does not even at-

* Newman’s *Romanism*, pp. 233, 235.

† *Ibid.* pp. 317, 318.

tempt. Nay more, he admits that there may be something of truth in the objections thus made to his doctrine about the Church, and simply contents himself with the remark, that "he cannot believe that what he has been drawing out is, therefore, a mere tale of other times, when addressed to those who are really bent on serving God as well as they can, and who consult what is most likely to please him*."

After this it seems to be almost superfluous labour to say anything further in refutation of the high-church doctrine concerning the authoritative teaching of the Church. But as I am desirous of passing by no argument that may appear to carry with it the smallest weight, I will proceed at once to the examination of what I take to be the strongest ground occupied by the opponents of private judgement, viz. the difficulty, on the part of people generally, of interpreting Scripture for themselves. There is so much of it, it is contended, that is deep and mysterious,—so much that is dark and obscure and hidden from common observation, that none but those who have "a commission from God to guide the Church" can dive into its depths,—can penetrate into its secret places, and bring out its true and genuine signification.

"I have been arguing," says a Tractarian, "that

* Romanism, p. 319.

Scripture is a deep book, and that the peculiar doctrines concerning the Church contained in the Prayer-book are in its depths. Now let it be remarked in corroboration, that the early Church always did consider Scripture to be what I have been arguing from the structure of it, viz. a book with very recondite meanings: this they considered, not merely with reference to its teaching the particular class of doctrines in question, but as regards its entire teaching. They considered that it was full of mysteries*.”

In the same manner, also, writes Mr. Newman: “The explanations given by Protestants of particular texts of Scripture will be found to involve an inconsistency and want of intelligible principle, which show how impossible it is for the mass of men to contemplate Scripture without imparting to it the colouring which they themselves have received in the course of their education†.”

And are the clergy under no temptation or bias to give to the Scriptures one interpretation rather than another, to impress upon them the image of their own opinions, to make them reflective of their own views and inclinations? But, not to insist upon this, I pass on to the consideration of the *principle* deduced from the alleged obscurity

* Tracts for the Times, No. 85. p. 68.

† Newman's Romanism, p. 183.

of Scripture. In consequence, it is said, of that obscurity and the difficulty, thence resulting, of getting at its actual meaning, it is necessary that some test or standard should be set up for the purpose of ascertaining and determining what it is. There must be some external guide to conduct the inquirer into the true path ; and what can that be but the Church,—the Church as she speaks in her catholic or universal character ? “ It is necessary,” says Vincent of Lerins, as approvingly cited by Mr. Newman, “ that the heavenly sense of Scripture be explained according to the Church’s understanding of it, principally in those questions only on which the *foundations* of the whole Catholic doctrine rest *.” According to the Church’s understanding ! What church ? the Roman Catholic ? No, answer the Oxford divines. But you acknowledge her to be a branch of the Catholic Church of Christ †,—you admit the genuineness of her orders,—you allow her to be in possession of the true apostolic succession : why, therefore, refuse to acknowledge her as the organ of the Church ? Because, it is replied, of her errors and corruptions. Then regular orders, apostolic succession, and the grace of the sacraments, are no security that the

* Lectures on Romanism, p. 309.

† “ Romanists and we are both branches of the one Catholic Church.”—*Ibid.* p. 322.

church possessing them conveys to us the genuine traditions or judgements of the Church Catholic. But why am I required, on this ground, to grant to the Church of England what I am forbidden to grant to the Church of Rome? Admit, however, the superior claims of the English Church,—allow that she is the true interpreter of Catholic tradition as Catholic tradition is of Scripture; to whom am I to look as the organ through which she speaks to the people? The answer, no doubt, will be, to the clergy. But the clergy are not agreed among themselves as to what the judgement of the Church, in many cases, is. For instance, upon the great question of apostolic succession, some of the doctors of the English Church affirm that certain texts of Scripture support it; while others again, equally learned and accomplished, affirm the contrary. So with respect to baptismal regeneration; the corporal presence; the office of the Christian priesthood, and other important points, the English clergy are divided into two or more parties, and hold the most discordant opinions. Nor is this all; for, even when they come to the exposition of their own authorized formularies,—the thirty-nine articles for instance, framed to prevent diversity of opinion,—no agreement exists among them—some contending that they are to be understood in one sense, and some in another. “Still,” says Mr. Newman, “in spite

of differences within and without, our own Church may surely be considered among us as the voice of her who has been in the world ever one and the same since Christ came.—She professes to be the Catholic Church, and to transmit that one ancient Catholic faith; and she does transmit it, simply and intelligibly*.”

There really seems to be no end to the daring and reckless assertions of these modern high-church men. One would imagine, from the passage just quoted, that the English Church has been always the same, always maintaining the same doctrines, and uniformly speaking the language of the Catholic Church. But a moment's reference to history will utterly dispel this delusion; for in the year 1537 Archbishop Cranmer, in connection with others, drew up a certain number of articles †, which,

* Newman's Romanism, p. 320.

† They amounted in number to ten. They were sent, by order of King Henry VIII., to the Convocation then sitting at St. Paul's, and were by them passed unanimously. About a year after this, that is, in 1538, the Statute of the Six Articles was passed, all which articles strictly accorded with the doctrines of the Romish Church.

In 1552, being the fourth year of the reign of King Edward VI., the doctrines of the English Church were represented in forty-two articles (as mentioned in the text), drawn up by Cranmer and Ridley, and which were subsequently approved in Council and received the royal sanction.

Ten years later, viz. in 1562, the fifth of the reign of Queen

having passed the Convocation, constituted at that period the faith of the Church of England. These articles inculcated the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, auricular confession, and transubstantiation. According to them "it was a meet thing that the images of Christ and our Lady should stand in the churches to promote the devotions of the congregation; it was very laudable to pray to saints, and it was a very good and charitable deed to pray for the souls departed *." Thus spake the Church of England in the year 1537. Did she then utter the voice of the Catholic Church? Was she then divinely guided to teach the truth? If so, she was otherwise guided in 1552, and the voice which was then heard sounded a different note from that which was given out fifteen years before; for in the forty-two articles which were now framed by Cranmer, Ridley and other divines, those just referred to were entirely omitted, and others of a different and opposite character were substituted in their place—thus showing that if the Church of England was right in 1537 she was wrong in 1552, and *vice versâ*.

Elizabeth, these forty-two articles having been reduced to thirty-nine, were in this shape presented to the Convocation by Archbishop Parker and received their unanimous approbation. With some trifling alteration, made in them in 1571, they constitute the present existing articles of the Church of England.

* Fuller's Church History, book v. pp. 221, 223.

“Should it be asked,” observes one of the writers of the ‘Tracts,’ “whence our knowledge of the truth should be derived, since there is so much of meagreness and mistake in our more popular exponents of it, it may be replied, first, that the writings of the Fathers contain abundant directions how to ascertain it*.” And Mr. Newman, remarking upon the tenacity with which Christians of this age and country maintain the notion, that truth of doctrine can be gained from Scripture, and that of tradition they are no adequate judges, follows it up by saying, “It does seem a reason for putting before them, if possible, the principal works of the Fathers, translated as Scripture is, that they may have by them what, whether used or not, will at least act as a check upon the growth of an undue dependence on the word of individual teachers, and will be a something to consult, if they have reason to doubt the Catholic character of any tenet to which they are invited to accede†.”

This, it must be confessed, is an extraordinary proposal. The Scriptures, it is urged, are difficult of interpretation. The people require a guide to the right understanding of them, and therefore let the works of the Fathers be translated and put into their hands for this purpose. This assuredly is

* No. 71. p. 35.

† Lectures on Romanism, pp. 203, 204.

piling difficulty upon difficulty. If the Scriptures are not easy to be understood, are the Fathers more so? What are we to think of the common reader poring over the contents of huge volumes of the ancient Christian writers in order to discover the sense which they have put upon Scripture? Was anything so preposterous ever advanced before? Unquestionably, I say, where there is one difficult passage to be found in the Scriptures there are a hundred more difficult to be met with in the Fathers. And there is moreover this essential difference between them, that while the great facts and principles of Christian truth—those facts and principles which constitute the substance of the Gospel, and which alone are sufficient to make a man wise unto salvation *,—are so plainly and broadly inscribed on the pages of the New Testament that he “ who

* “ Why,” says Chillingworth, “ does every one of the four Evangelists entitle their book the Gospel, if any necessary and essential part of the Gospel were left out of it? Can we imagine that either they omitted something necessary out of ignorance, not knowing it to be necessary, or, knowing it to be so, maliciously concealed it? or, out of negligence, did the work they had undertaken by halves? If none of these things can without blasphemy be imputed to them, then certainly it most evidently follows that every one of them writ the whole Gospel of Christ; I mean all the necessary and essential parts of it. So that if we had no other book of Scripture but one of them alone, we should not want anything necessary to salvation.”—*Chillingworth's Religion of Protestants, Works*, p. 131. ed. 1836.

runs may read" them, the writings of the Fathers⁼⁼ are everywhere involved in clouds of obscurity, and, oftentimes, scarcely a ray of light is to be seen penetrating through the darkness. The mists of[—] bad metaphysics, of subtle distinctions, of typical constructions, and allegorical interpretations, hang around them in such abundance, that frequently it is almost impossible to grope our way through them, and to arrive at anything like clearness and certainty. "Let the Scriptures," said Milton, "be hard; are they more hard, more crabbed, more abstruse than the Fathers? He that cannot understand the sober, plain, and unaffected style of the Scriptures will be ten times more puzzled with the knotty Africanisms, the pampered metaphors, the intricate and involved sentences of the Fathers*." And yet these are the writings which it is proposed to place under the eye of the Christian reader, to serve as a protection from error and a guide to scriptural truth! What is this but taking the blind to lead the blind?

According to Mr. Newman, Catholic tradition is the "doctrinal key" to the interpretation of Scripture. But who has possession of this key? Not the people. They of themselves know nothing of it. It may be in the hands of the clergy. They may imagine that they have got hold of something,

* Of Reformation in England. Works, p. 9, ed. 1838.

called tradition, which will open the dark passages of Scripture, and let in upon them the full light of truth. As for the general body of Christian believers it is an instrument placed quite beyond their reach, and which, if it were not, they would be unable by themselves alone to use properly and efficiently. How then are they to obtain it, and by whom are they to be instructed in the use of it? They must go to the priest. He will deliver it to them, and he will instruct and guide them in the right application of it. Hence it follows, that as the clergy are the sole judges of what Catholic tradition is,—as they are the appointed keepers and guardians of this precious deposit,—as it is their office and privilege to bring it forth and exhibit it to the people, they are, in fact, themselves possessors of the authority and certainty ascribed to Tradition. They might, therefore, as well begin at the beginning. They might as well tell us plainly the Scriptures say so and so; that we pronounce to be their meaning as laid open to us by the use of the “doctrinal key,” and that therefore you must believe. They might as well do this at once as proceed by the circuitous road of the Church and Tradition and the Fathers, for the result is precisely the same. They now say to us, in reading the Scriptures and in giving them the right construction, the true interpretation, you must take

for your umpire and guide the judgement of the universal Catholic Church *. On asking what that judgement is and where it is to be found, the answer is, leave that to us ; we will tell you what it is and where it is. We will show you the sense which it gives to Scripture, and that and no other is the sense in which you must understand it †. This is the course pursued by the Anglo-Catholic divines ; and who does not see that it amounts to precisely the same thing as if they were, without concealment or reserve ‡, to declare that they are the authorized and infallible expounders of Scripture, and that their expositions must be received as the only just and true ones ?

But as it happens that these supposed infallible expounders of Tradition and Scripture take differ-

* " The Bible is in the hands of the Church, to be dealt with in such a way as the Church shall consider best for the expression of her own mind at the time."—*British Critic*, No. 60. p. 453.

† So says Archbishop Whately : " It is plain that to recommend ordinary Christians to give up their judgement to the guidance of ' the Church,' is to refer them to the guidance of the pastors of their own denomination. They not only *will*, but they *must* so understand the recommendation ; they have *no means* of complying with it in any other way."—*Essays on the Dangers to the Christian Faith*, p. 181.

‡ Perhaps the art of concealment and disguise is one which they think themselves justified in adopting, following in this respect, as they assert, the example set them by the apostles and the early Fathers.

ent sides of the same question, by what criterion am I to determine which of them is right? How am I to know whom to follow—whose judgement to abide by? The mark of ‘apostolic succession’ will not assist me, nor will the possession of genuine holy orders direct me, for there are churches and ministers differing widely from each other,—but all of them inpressed, it is said, with these characteristic signs of the true Church. What then is to be done?

It is not however upon this negative ground alone,—upon the impossibility of finding among human beings any authorized or infallible judge of truth and error,—that I would take my stand in the assertion and vindication of the right of private judgement; though it follows of course that if no one else can establish a claim to decide for us, it belongs to us to decide for ourselves. But we have a stronger position to take up and maintain, which is this;—these very parties, the Roman Catholics and the Anglo-Catholics, in asking us to submit to and abide by the decisions of their church or clergy, are still appealing to our private judgement, and that too upon the most important question that can be proposed for our consideration. They ask us to judge of the necessity, the propriety, the reasonableness, of making their judgement the standard of ours. The great previous ques-

tion to be determined is, whether it would be right in us,—whether we should be justified in making any other person's creed the rule and ground of our own, and, if so, whose it shall be?

It is not because a man says, you must follow me, that, therefore, we are to follow him; for, in this case, truth would no longer be one and uniform, but diverse and discordant. We must judge for ourselves whether he is entitled to this deference and submission; whether it is safe or just to follow him. They, who deny to us the right of judging for ourselves, and insist upon the obligation of our being guided by them, are, by this very act, requiring us to exercise our own judgement upon the most important of all questions, viz. whether we *ought* to make this surrender of our own understandings to those of any other men. If I do make this surrender, what but my own individual judgement of its necessity or propriety can determine me to do so? Still more imperative upon us is the exercise of this judgement when we are called upon to arbitrate between different claimants. Trust me, says the pope, or the Church of Rome. No, exclaims the Anglo-Catholic divine; if you do, you will, in many important matters, be led astray. Ours is the genuine Catholic Church—rely upon her, and you cannot go wrong. Here—upon the Greek Church thinks that she has a right

to be heard, and accordingly steps forward and declares that the truth lies with her, and that all else are in error. Suppose that by one of them the claim can be really substantiated, and that with this one infallibility and certainty actually dwell ; the question then arises, which of them it is ? And to decide this question must of necessity be left to our own judgement. So that after all, private judgement *must* be appealed to, and *must* be exercised.

To this it may be said, all men are not competent to judge in sacred matters. Some, from their education and the circumstances of their lives—from being altogether unaccustomed to think and reflect, are wholly disqualified for coming to a sound conclusion upon the various questions pertaining to religion. It is, therefore, proper that there should be some authorized guide,—some fixed and certain standard to look up to, and by which the true doctrine should be distinguished from the false.

Upon this I observe, first, that right, and competency properly to use the right, must not be confounded with one another. The one is not necessarily the accompaniment of the other. A man may have the right to do, what he is ill qualified for doing wisely and beneficially. You have the right to choose your physician, your lawyer, your engineer, and it is important that you should choose well ; and yet, from the circumstances in which you

are placed, you may not be very competent to make a good choice. In such a case we cannot say, it does not belong to you to determine the matter. That is left to another who will do this for you, and to his decisions you must unhesitatingly bow. We could not address to any one language like this; but we might reasonably and becomingly say to him, before you come to a decision upon a matter of such great importance, take care that you have qualified yourself to judge rightly. Avail yourself of the knowledge and experience of others. Learn from them the facts which will give you the means of coming to a sound and satisfactory conclusion. The power, the right of deciding is unquestionably yours. That we do not deny. You may choose whom you please. All we say is, see to it that you render yourself competent and qualified to choose well. Such advice—such recommendation as this would be reasonable and proper. And if this were all that is meant by questioning the right of private judgement on the subject of religion,—if it were only intended to check presumption, to curb rashness, to prevent haste, to make men cautious and careful in their inquiries, willing to receive instruction and anxious to avail themselves of all the light which the labours and learning of others might throw upon the subject of their meditation,—if no more than this were intended by the advocates of ‘Church

principles,' there would be little or nothing to object to. On the contrary, as has been judiciously observed in a discourse on this subject by Dr. Hawkins, Provost of Oriel College, Oxford, there is a duty as well as a right involved in the exercise of this privilege of judging for ourselves. In contending for the right, we are too apt to overlook and forget the duty. The duty is, to see that we are competent to judge of the questions that come before us; that we have duly qualified ourselves, both intellectually and morally, for forming an opinion upon the matter under consideration. If this were done oftener than it is, there would be far less of ignorance and presumption displayed on the subject of religion than, unhappily, we have now not unfrequently to encounter. It would then be felt, perhaps, that we are not at liberty to sport with opinions, and to scatter about at random the mere reveries of our fancy, careless whether they operate for good or for evil. There would then be impressed upon our minds the belief, that there is a right and a wrong use of the faculties of the intellect as well as of the body,—that we are answerable, not indeed to man, but to God, for the principles we adopt,—and that, with the power and the privilege which we possess of seeking the truth for ourselves, there is bound up the obligation to seek it

in a right spirit and with the aid of the proper appliances.

Undoubtedly, every man should ask himself, before coming to a positive judgement upon the question submitted to his consideration, am I qualified, am I in a right position, to judge fairly? There is no assumption, there is no unreasonableness in requiring of any man such a preliminary step as this. But when you say to him, You have no right in this matter to judge for yourself,—your private judgement must bend to my private judgement, or to that of a collective body called the Church or the Clergy,—the mind is very apt to feel indignant and to revolt at such audacious usurpation. He may fairly say, Who gave you this authority? I see that churches differ from one another, and that individuals belonging to the same church differ also. I know that it becomes me to pay attention to what wise and good men have said on the subject of my inquiries, and I trust that I shall not be backward in availing myself of all the assistance which they are able to afford me; but to tell me that I am only to hearken and obey, that I must yield unresistingly to their decisions, be they what they may, is in itself not only an unjust, but an absurd requirement; and the absurdity becomes still more manifest and glaring when I consider that wise and good

men differ among themselves, and that no greater difficulty belongs to the inquiry, What is truth? than belongs to the question, Which of these wise and good men are in possession of the truth? It would therefore be as useless and vain, as it is preposterous and absurd, to deny to any man the right of private judgement*. But let him be told that there is a duty, a great and sacred duty, going along with the right: let him be told that the great law, under which man is placed, is, that he shall receive illumination and impulse from those who are wiser and better than himself: let him be told that, in the pursuit of religious truth, he is morally bound to seek those aids which he would be glad to accept in all other cases of interest and importance: let him be told that, from age, education, capacity, or acquirements, he may not possess the means of

* "The question," says Archbishop Whately, "when plainly stated, is not whether men should follow the guidance of inclination and fancy; nor, again, whether they should reject all human teaching, and refuse all assistance in their inquiries after religious truth; but, supposing a man willing to avail himself of all helps within his reach and to divest himself of all prejudice, is he ultimately to decide according to the best of his own judgement and embrace what appears to him truth? or, is he to forgo the exercise of his own judgement, and receive implicitly what is decided for him by the authority of the Church, labouring to stifle any different conviction that may present itself to his mind?" —*Dangers to Christian Faith from the teaching or the conduct of its professors*, p. 179.

coming to a just and sound conclusion, and that therefore it will be wise and proper in him to suspend his judgement for a while, or to defer to the opinions of those who stand highest in general estimation for their learning and virtue, the extent of their attainments, the vigour of their understandings, and the soberness of their conclusions.

We are, all of us, a good deal dependent upon one another ; we are, all of us, obliged to take much upon trust. This is the case not only with men of little learning and little information, but with men well accomplished in both these respects. Take as an example the case of two or three men of different talents and attainments inquiring into the evidences of the Christian religion. The first, we will say, is a scholar, and well read in all the branches of Christian literature. The second is one who, though not able to read the New Testament in the original or the works of the Greek and Latin Fathers, has still leisure and opportunity for reading such translations as have been made of them, or such writings as contain the best and fullest information concerning them. The third is possessed of plain good sense, but has little or no time for reading works of any considerable extent, and derives therefore most of his knowledge on the subject from those who are able to give him, in a small compass, the result of their reading. Now each

of these gets hold of the same facts, though in different ways ; and, possessing these facts, the one may be as competent to draw from them the just inference, as the other. The first will say that, from his own personal examination, he knows that the books of the New Testament (with some slight exception) existed in their present form at a very early period of the Christian æra, as is testified by the large quotations made from them in the works of the first Christian Fathers, and which have come under his own observation. The second will say that he also has ascertained the same fact, not indeed from a perusal of the ancient authors themselves, but from the account given of them in the works of Lardner, Less, Paley and others, in whose representations he places the most entire confidence. Then comes the third, and he tells us that he has learnt this fact, neither from the Fathers themselves, nor from the writings of those by whom the Fathers are largely quoted, but from the verbal testimony or assurance of those who *did* thus obtain their knowledge, and on the truth and integrity of whose statements he firmly relies. Now, in these cases, it might perhaps be said that the last person, the poor unlettered man, is altogether disqualified for drawing any argument in favour of the authenticity of the New Testament from the fact in question, because he has not been able to

obtain a knowledge of it by means of his own personal examination of the authorities on which it depends. To this I answer that, availing himself as he may of the labours and learning of others for the desired information, he then becomes (unless there are other disqualifications to hinder him) quite as competent to reason from the fact thus made known to him, as the other two that have been mentioned, though without their aid and apart from their testimony no such competency would be possessed by him. It is certainly true that on the subject of religion,—on matters connected with the interpretation of the New Testament,—there is much concerning which many persons, from their situation and circumstances, from their state and condition intellectually and morally considered, are not very well qualified to form a correct judgement. If they think about them at all, their thoughts will probably be very crude and ill-digested ; and hence perhaps we shall be told that they, more especially, stand in need of guidance and direction. Undoubtedly they do ; but, instead of saying to them, You have no right to look into these matters, you have no right to inquire and to judge of such things, you must look up to us and take our opinions as the rule and measure of your own,—instead of addressing them in a style of this sort, which might be justly felt and resented as an insult, the wiser

course would be to say to them, The great essential points of Christian belief, all that it is most necessary and important for you to know, are so clearly and explicitly and emphatically taught in the scriptures of the New Testament, that all may understand them, from the least to the greatest. "Secret things belong unto the Lord, but those which are revealed belong unto us and to our children." Upon these let your thoughts be chiefly exercised; give most of your attention to them; they will instruct you in the one thing needful, they will make you wise unto salvation; and if you are desirous of extending your inquiries beyond these,—if you are anxious to become acquainted not only with the leading principles, the object, the purpose, the spirit of Christianity, but with the letter of the New Testament, with the exact meaning of all its various contents, argumentative as well as didactic, controversial as well as historical, obscure as well as plain,—remember that, for this purpose, certain qualifications are absolutely necessary, and that without these you will only trouble and perplex yourselves in vain. Unquestionably you have the right—as great a right as any one has—to inquire into the meaning of every part and portion of Scripture; the right, I say, to do so, provided you have rendered yourselves competent to do so. But it does not follow that, because the right is

with you, you are therefore in a fit state to exercise it wisely and beneficially; that will depend upon the means and opportunities now in your possession. Bound up with the right, which we all possess, is the duty of seeing whether we have the requisite qualifications for using it properly and advantageously. In this respect we all stand upon the same ground of obligation and responsibility. We may, and should, all of us, judge for ourselves in every case where we are competent to judge; and though that competency may not be possessed by all, on all questions lying within the province of theology or religion, it *is* possessed by all men of plain good understandings with respect to those questions which are of the first necessity and the greatest importance. As Chillingworth observes, "the Scripture is so plain in those things which concern our duty, that whosoever desires and endeavours to find the will of God there, he shall either find it, or at least not dangerously mistake it*." And the same sentiment is expressed by one not inferior in force of reasoning, or variety of learning: "In Scripture," says Jeremy Taylor, "all that is necessary is plain: if a man retain honesty and simplicity, he cannot err in a matter of absolute necessity: God's goodness hath secured all honest and careful persons from that; for other

* Works, p. 720, ed. 1836.

things he must follow the best guides he can, and he cannot be obliged to follow better than God hath given him*.”

We are told however by the Oxford divines, that saving Christian truth is in the keeping of the Church alone, and that of this truth the priest, as her organ, is the proclaimer and expounder. But why am I to believe that what he announces as the doctrine of the Church is therefore Christian truth? Because he tells me so? because he tells me that he has authority to declare it? Why here is another minister of the same Church, possessed of the same episcopal ordination and holding precisely the same office, who assures me that this assumption of authority is all a delusion; that neither of them are endowed with any such power or privilege as that laid claim to, and that what are called the traditions of the Church are entitled to little consideration or respect. I find also, upon further investigation, that what is declared to be primitive and catholic truth by one, is denounced and condemned by another as mischievous error, as a spurious addition to the genuine Christian doctrine. Thus placed in a strait betwixt two, there is no other course left to me than to examine the matter for myself and decide thereon according to my own honest judgement.

* Liberty of Prophesying, pp. 234, 235.

There is one topic more, bearing upon the subject before us, upon which I must here offer a few observations. The Anglo-Catholic Church, which certain divines now pronounce to be the only true Church, is but a limb torn away and separated from the body of the Roman Catholic Church. On what ground, I ask, was this separation made? On the ground, it is replied, of the errors and corruptions which had grown up in the Romish Church. But who are the judges that have come to such a conclusion? The majority of her members? her bishops and clergy in council assembled? No—only a few, a small minority. A certain number of persons, members of her communion, choose to declare her corrupt, and thereby are separated from her: that is, they set up their judgement in opposition to that of the Church to which they belonged; the few decide against the many. Allowing that the Church of Rome had become corrupt, *who*, according to the doctrine of the Oxford divines themselves, had a right to convict and condemn her? Was this the right of the minority? If it was, the whole theory of Church authority is overturned and uprooted from its very foundation; for if the Church (then the universal Church as much as a church could be expected to be) is not to be attended to and obeyed when she speaks through her councils and doctors, *when* is that at-

tention due and that obedience to be paid ? Either, therefore, the right of private judgement belongs alike to all, or the Church of England, upon the principles of her own advocates, cannot be justified in her separation from the apostolically descended Church of Rome.

In answer to this, a new mode of defence has lately been adopted for the Church of England, and it is pretended that she did not alienate herself from the Church of Rome, but was by that Church rejected and cut off from her communion, and that therefore her separate independent existence is one not of choice but of necessity.

“ I deny absolutely,” says Mr. Palmer, “ that the English Church did, either in fact or in intention, separate herself from the communion of the rest of the Catholic Church.” And again : “ Neither the Church of England nor king Henry VIII. had any notion of separating themselves from the communion of the rest of Christendom when they removed the papal jurisdiction, which they justly held to be an usurpation altogether unsupported by the word of God or by the laws of the Church*.”

Surely this is little better than mere verbal trifling. Say that the Church of England did not separate herself from the Church of Rome, can it

* Palmer on the Church, vol. i. pp. 339, 341.

be denied that she did that which necessarily led to a separation? Did she not refuse any longer to comply with the conditions which were deemed essential to Catholic communion? Did she not rise up in rebellion against that authority which she had hitherto acknowledged and obeyed? But the papal jurisdiction, it is alleged, being an usurpation unauthorized by the word of God, the English branch of the Church Catholic was justified in casting off the intolerable yoke. But had not this jurisdiction been established by the consent of the majority? And what right had any smaller number to place themselves in opposition to the sense of the general body? Then again, I ask, would the Church of England have been contented with the mere rejection of the Romish jurisdiction? This might be all that King Henry cared about, but was it all that the Church cared about,—that the best and wisest of her children contemplated? Or do Mr. Palmer himself and others of the same school intend to say, that they would have been satisfied if nothing more had been done? They talk sometimes of the errors and corruptions which had gathered about the Romish Church. Would they have had such errors and corruptions remain? Would they have made no protest against them? Would they have continued to sanction them,—to

sanction not only corrupt practices and erroneous proceedings, but false principles, *errors of faith**? If not, what course could they have pursued, but either voluntarily to have separated themselves from all contact and fellowship with them, or have adopted such a line of conduct as must have compelled the Church of Rome, without an entire change in her constitution, to expel them from her bosom? In either case the division would have been caused by them,—by setting up their judgement in opposition to that of the general body of Catholic believers. The Church of Rome only did in their case what the Church of England did in the case of the Nonconformists. When the latter refused compliance with the despotic requirements of the Act of Uniformity, the Church of England rejected them from her communion; and it might, with just as much reason and truth, be asserted, that by this proceeding the English Church departed from the Nonconformist churches, as that the Roman Catholics departed from the Church of England. In both instances the separation or division that took place arose out of the resistance that was made by

* We read in the nineteenth article, to which of course Mr. Palmer and his colleagues have given their unfeigned assent and consent, that “as the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the *Church of Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in *matters of faith*.”

one party to the usurpations of the other, and in both instances the justification, the defence, is the same.

But consider, it is said,—consider the consequences flowing from the admission of the right of private judgement. Look at the false doctrines, the ridiculous opinions, the foolish extravagances, the absurd and mischievous practices which the exercise of this pretended right has often led to. Ye shall know it by its fruits, and see by its fruits the evils of which it has been productive, and for which it should stand condemned and proscribed.

It cannot be denied that the exercise of private judgement may be abused and misapplied, and so be, sometimes, the occasion of much mischief. But this is the case with all our powers and privileges: we possess nothing that may not be made an instrument of evil. It is a condition of all our blessings that they may be perverted and turned to a bad account. The surrender of our own judgements to the opinions of other men,—this tame unquestioning submission to Church authority, of the advantages of which we now hear so much,—must be admitted, even by its own abettors, to be and to have been the occasion of great and lamentable errors and corruptions in the Church of Christ. If not, why do they keep aloof from the Romish

communion? And if it should be alleged that the right of individual judgement may be conceded to some and refused to others,—that, while it is allowed to the cultivated and the learned, it must be denied to the illiterate and unlearned,—my answer is, that learning and other acquirements are, in themselves, no security for the possession of sound understandings and sober judgements, for the exercise of calm and dispassionate inquiry, for a careful examination of premises and a cautious deduction of inferences. It is not the uninstructed and unlearned classes alone that have fallen into gross absurdities of opinion and still grosser extravagances of conduct. Those among the well-educated and the learned,—men issuing from cloisters and colleges,—have, in proportion to their number, been betrayed into errors as ridiculous and into practices as contemptible as any of those that can be traced to the humbler ranks of society. Look into the writings of some of the Oxford divines themselves, and I will venture to say that no men, be their condition in life what it may, have ever put forth more wild, fantastic, silly, odious opinions than they have. In proof of this I need only recall to your recollection some of the extracts from their writings which were given in former lectures. These I cannot again bring forward, but I will refer to one or two others of a somewhat different kind. Dr. Pusey, in his ‘Treatise on Baptism,’ approves

of the Catholic practice of anointing with oil in the administration of this rite, and of the ceremony for casting out the evil spirit that lurks in the body of the infant. He makes also the passage through the Red Sea and over the river Jordan types of baptism, and contends that baptism itself is the washing of regeneration and a renewing of the Holy Ghost. Mr. Sewell, the late moral philosophy professor at Oxford, maintains (in his work entitled 'Christian Morals') that by episcopal baptism the devil is literally expelled from the bodies of new-born babes; and he speaks favourably of the form of exorcism as practised in the early ages, and with an evident desire that it should be restored to the Church. That form is thus represented by him: "When the person, whose education the Church was undertaking, was brought to be baptized, he was first, either in his own person or in his sponsors, placed towards the west, barefooted and stripped of his outer garments,—his hands stretched out, as if pushing an enemy from him—his head averted,—and thrice he was bidden to spit in the face of Satan, as a form of abhorrence and rejection, and thrice to renounce him and all his works. And then he was turned to the east,—his eyes lifted up to heaven, his hands stretched out in prayer,—and he was called on to make a solemn profession of entering into the service of another master, Christ."

He also maintains that “in the Scriptures the cross of Christ is seen in the tree of life, in the wood of the sacrifice laid on the shoulders of Isaac, in the rod of Moses, in the pole on which the serpent hung, in the staff of David, in the wood of the ark, in the bough thrown into the bitter waters. So the mystery of baptism is read in the deep which covered the earth, in the waters of the deluge, in the Red Sea, in Jordan, in the waters of the Nile turned into blood, in the pitcher of water changed into wine for the marriage of Cana, in the water borne by the man who prepared the room for our Lord’s passover; and so of the other mysteries of Christianity*.”

What sillier things than these could the exercise of private judgement lead to among the humblest and the lowest of the people? Is it not also notorious that controversies of the most foolish and frivolous kind have originated with and been car-

* See Edinburgh Review, No. 154. pp. 473, 474. In the Fathers may be found, as is shown in the fourth lecture, many interpretations of Scripture parallel to this of Mr. Sewell’s. The following, not before quoted, may serve as a specimen. Jerome (who flourished in the fourth century), writing to Pope Damasus concerning a portion of Scripture in the Old Testament, makes “Isaac to represent God the Father, Rebecca the Holy Spirit, Esau the former people multiplied by the Devil, and Jacob the Church of Christ.” Yet these are the expounders of Scripture to whom we are instructed to look up as guides, and to follow with undoubting steps!

ried on by those who are pre-eminently styled the learned? We know that some of the worst errors and the greatest corruptions with which Christianity has been burthened were introduced into it, not by the unlearned, the plain common people, the 'simplices,' the 'idiotæ,' as Tertullian calls them, but by those who had come out of the schools of heathen philosophy. It was they who talked so much about essences and hypostases, of unity in plurality and plurality in unity, of the divine nature incorporated with the human nature, and the Godhead blended with the manhood, while the great body of the people, the plain simple Christians, could not understand this jargon, and for a long time strenuously maintained and held fast to the pure intelligible doctrine of one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. And we have this fact recorded in the gospels, that while the learned Scribes and Pharisees cavilled at the discourses of Christ, the common people listened reverentially to the gracious words which fell from his lips, and went away rejoicing that they had heard him.

LECTURE VI.

FROM what has been said in the foregoing lectures of "the Church principles" so strenuously maintained by divines of the Oxford or Tractarian school, it will be seen on what high ground of authority they place that branch of the Catholic Church denominated the Church of England. According to them it is divine in its origin, episcopal in its form, descends to us in direct succession from the apostles, and is the appointed judge in religious controversies. Its rulers are the bishops, assisted by the clergy of their respective dioceses, and in them is vested the right to manage and direct all its affairs. This is the theory of the polity of the Church according to the views of the Anglo-Catholic party. They maintain that a visible society was established by Christ and his apostles, whose constitution and government are one and uniform, that in this constitution prelacy forms an essential element, without which no community of professing Christians can be considered a part of the Catholic Church of Christ, and that by the

grace of the episcopal order alone is any efficacy imparted to the administration of the word and sacraments.

Now with such lofty pretensions as these,—with such high notions of the independent power and authority of the Church, its whole history and its present condition in this country are entirely at variance. Of the truth of this statement the party referred to are perfectly sensible. Their writings abound with complaints and remonstrances against the existing state of the Church, of its dependence upon and subjection to the secular power. This dependence and subjection they feel to be not a little troublesome and perplexing to those who, like themselves, are contending for the divine origin and institution of the episcopal form of church government, the perpetual and unalterable nature of the Christian priesthood, and the absolute right and duty of the Church, through the instrumentality of that priesthood, to be its own ruler and director.

Nothing is more certain than that the Church of England, ever since its separation from the Church of Rome, does not correspond, in its external form, with the views entertained by the Oxford divines of what a Church should be. Instead of being independent of the civil power and enacting its own laws and regulations, the Church, as a separate

estate, has no independent jurisdiction at all. It exists only by and through the State, and cannot change an article of its creed, or effect a single alteration in its discipline without the express sanction of an Act of Parliament. Respecting this position of the Church, and its bearings upon the principles of the Oxford school, some further observations will be made presently ; meanwhile, I will here say a few words to show that it has not only been doubted, but positively denied by some of the greatest scholars and divines of which our country can boast, that any invariable fixed form of church government was laid down by Christ or his apostles.

The first name that I shall mention is that of Hooker, the celebrated author of the ‘ Ecclesiastical Polity.’ “ It was maintained,” says Hallam, “ by this great writer, not only that ritual observances are variable, according to the discretion of ecclesiastical rulers, but that no certain form of polity is set down in Scripture as generally indispensable for a Christian Church*.” In confirmation of this statement, let Hooker’s own words be cited : “ To change those things that are not essential to salvation (as forms of church government) is, no otherwise to change the plan of salvation than a path is changed by altering only the uppermost

* Constitutional History, vol. i. p. 294.

face of it, which, be it laid with gravel, or set with grass, or paved with stone, remaineth still the same path. . . . Is it an oversight that we reckon these things (external rites and matters of government) in the number of things accessory, not things necessary? Let them who think us blameable consider their own words. Do they not plainly compare the one unto garments, which cover the body of the Church; the other unto rings, bracelets and jewels, that only adorn it? The one, to that food which the Church doth live by; the other, to that which maketh her diet liberal, dainty, and more delicious? Is dainty fare a thing necessary to the sustenance,—a rich attire to the clothing of the body? If not, how can they urge the necessity of that which themselves resemble by things not necessary*?”

Bishop Warburton makes these observations on the ‘Ecclesiastical Polity:’ “The great Hooker was not only against, but laid down principles that have entirely subverted, all pretences to a divine unalterable right in any form of church government whatever. Yet, strange to say, his work was so unavoidable a confutation of puritanical principles, which, by the way, claimed their presbytery as of divine right, that the churchmen took advantage

* Ecclesiastical Polity, book iii. pp. 210, 211; Hanbury’s ed. 1830.

of the success of their champion, and now began to claim a divine right for episcopacy on the strength of that very book that subverted all pretences to every species of divine right whatsoever*.”

Whitgift, whom Mr. Keble calls the Church’s defender, maintained, according to the representation of Neal in his ‘History of the Puritans,’ “that though the Holy Scriptures were a perfect rule of faith, they were not designed as a standard of church government and discipline, but that this was changeable and might be accommodated to the civil government we live under; that the apostolic government was adapted to the Church in its infancy, but was to be enlarged and altered as the Church grew to maturity.”

“Whitgift, in his answer to Cartwright’s ‘Admonition’,” says Hallam, “rested the controversy in the main, as Hooker did, on the indifferency of church discipline and ceremony. It was not till afterwards that the defenders of the established order found out that one claim of divine right was best met by another†.”

Bishop Burnet says, that the direction of the apostles “to appoint elders in the several cities where Christianity prevailed is not a sufficient ground to

* Notes on Neal’s History of the Puritans in Warburton’s Works, 4to ed. 1788, vol. vii. p. 898.

† Constitutional History, vol. i. p. 293, note.

go upon for calling the order of the clergy a positive institution of Christ, because it does not appear that Christ gave any directions about that matter, and because the apostles never mention it as such, but only as a prudential, proper and useful office*."

Dr. Paley has clearly shown that the apostolic usages and directions do not warrant any exclusive form of ecclesiastical government. "While," says he, "the precepts of Christian morality and the great articles of its faith are for the most part precise and absolute, of perpetual and universal obligation, the laws which respect the discipline and government of the community are delivered in terms so general and indefinite as to admit of an application adapted to the mutable condition and varying exigencies of the Christian Church†."

To these names I shall only add one more,—that of Lord Bacon, who thus expresses himself: "That there should be but one form of discipline in all churches, I, for my part, do confess that on revolving the Scriptures I could never find any such thing; but that God hath left the like liberty to the church government as he had done to the civil government, to be varied according to time and place and accidents. For all civil governments

* Burnet's 'Full Examination of several important points,' p. 109.


† Paley's Works, vol. vii. p. 90. ed. 1825.

are restrained from God unto the general grounds of justice and manners, but the policies and forms of them are left free. So likewise in Church matters the substance of doctrine is immutable, and so are the general rules of government; but for rites and ceremonies and for the particular hierarchies, policies and disciplines of churches, they be left at large. And, therefore, it is good that we return again unto the ancient bounds of unity in the Church of God which was one faith, one baptism, and not one hierarchy, one discipline*.”

It thus appears that the Oxford divines hold very different opinions, respecting the constitution and government of the Christian Church, from those which were held by some of the most illustrious members of the Church of England itself in former times. Instead of maintaining that any particular form of administration or discipline was essential to the character of a true church, those distinguished men asserted that no directions as to the necessity of such a form were ever given by Christ or his apostles. They considered the whole matter to be one entirely of expediency, a question to be determined by the existing state of society,—by the usages and habits of the people whom it immediately concerned. They might have preferred the episcopal to any other mode of church govern-

* Bacon's Works, vol. iii. p. 150, quarto ed. 1765.

ment. They might have regarded it not only as more expedient, but as approaching nearer to the apostolic model. But they did not, on that account, claim for it the title of a divine ordinance. They did not ascribe to it the extraordinary virtue and efficacy which are now attributed to it. They did not put it forward as the necessary characteristic of a true church—as the one thing needful, without which condemnation immediately followed. On the contrary, they earnestly contended for the Christian rights and character of the Reformed Churches which had adopted a different mode of superintendence or government from that of Episcopacy, and strongly urged the propriety of holding communion with them,—of regarding and treating them as members of the same common family.—What names can the revived Laudian school present to us that will bear a comparison with those of Bacon, Hale, Selden among laymen, and those of Hooker, Usher, Chillingworth, Burnet, Tillotson, Sherlock, Paley among the divines? Who, then, can hear without wonder, and, at the same time, without indignation and disgust, such language as the following: “Why should we not seriously endeavour to impress our people with this plain truth, that by separating themselves from our communion, they separate themselves not only from a decent, orderly, useful society, but from the only Church



in this realm which has a right to be quite sure that she has the Lord's body to give to his people*?" And, again, Ministers duly ordained are to be honoured "as those who are entrusted with the keys of heaven and hell, and with the awful and mysterious privilege of dispensing Christ's body and blood†."

What, I ask, is the tendency, the end of all this, but the exaltation of the clerical office,—the revival of the old priestly domination,—the restoration of the power and authority possessed by the clergy in the dark ages? There is, however, one great obstacle to the accomplishment of such a purpose, and that is the jurisdiction, the controul, which the State exercises over the Church. This, as before observed, the Oxford party deeply feel, and deplore. With their notions of what the Church *should* be, they are greatly indignant at what it *is*. They know and feel that the episcopal church in this country is *not* its own ruler—does *not* ordain its own rites—does *not* appoint its own bishops—does *not* manage its own concerns,—that, in fact, all this is in the hands of the Sovereign and the Parliament. The Church of England is the church as by law established. Its authority lies not in a council of bishops, but in the great Council of the nation; and whatever little jurisdiction or power has been allow-

* Tracts for the Times, No. 4. p. 5. † Ibid. No. 10. p. 5.

ed to the Bishops, may be exercised by them without the advice or assistance of the inferior clergy. So that the ideal of a Catholic Church, as painted in the dreams of the Puseyite party, is certainly not realized in the existing Church of England. Hence their frequent and indignant assertion of the grievances which they allege the Church of England to be now suffering from the usurped authority of the State. Hence the bitter complaints which they make of the injustice done to her in depriving her of certain advantages and monopolies of which she was formerly in possession. Hence their doleful lamentations at seeing Christians of other denominations admitted by the State to the common rights and privileges of British citizens. That I may not be supposed to give a false or exaggerated representation of their views and feelings I will place before you a statement of their regrets and remonstrances in their own words. I shall begin with the authors of the 'Tracts for the Times.'

"Let me call your attention," says the writer of the second number, "to what seems a most dangerous infringement on our rights, on the part of the State. The Legislature has lately taken upon itself to remodel the dioceses of Ireland*; a pro-

* "The suppression of bishoprics in Ireland some years ago, being obviously intended not for the welfare but for the injury of the Church,—nothing but the apprehension of still greater evils,

ceeding which involves the appointment of certain bishops over certain clergy, and of certain clergy under certain bishops, without the Church being consulted in the matter. . . . Are we content to be accounted the mere creation of the State, as school-masters and teachers may be, or soldiers or magistrates, or other public officers? Did the State make us? Can it unmake us? Can it send out missionaries? Can it arrange dioceses? Surely all these are spiritual functions. Would St. Paul, with his good will, have suffered the Roman power to appoint Timothy, Bishop of Miletus, as well as of Ephesus? Would Timothy, at such a bidding have undertaken the charge? Is not the notion of such an order, such an obedience, absurd? Yet has it not been realized at what has lately happened? For in what is the English State at present different from the Roman formerly? Neither can be accounted members of the Church of Christ. No one can say the British Legislature is in our communion, or that its members are necessarily even Christians. What pretence then has it for not merely advising, but superseding the Ecclesiastical power*?"

and especially those which might have arisen from the want of *unanimity* in the Church herself on that occasion, could have imposed on that Church any obligation of yielding to so unjust an act."—*Palmer on the Church*, vol. ii. p. 260, note.

* No. 2. pp. 1, 2.

In the same strain writes Mr. Keble : “ What,” he asks, “ is the line to be taken by those clergymen who feel serious objections, in conscience and principle, to the course of ecclesiastical regulation now in progress ; who consider our Saviour’s charter to be violated by the admission of a body, constituted as the British Parliament now is, to legislate for the Church of Christ, especially without controul or authority from the Bishops synodically assembled ? Under such persuasion can we help regarding the laws so passed, or hereafter to be passed, as having in themselves no canonical force, and only then claiming the submission of Christ’s ministers and people, when enforced on us severally by command of our respective diocesans ? Or can we avoid entertaining fears that the whole may amount in God’s sight to the concurrence of the Church in a great national sin* ?”

My next quotation will be made from the *British Critic*, which, at the time, when the following passages were written, was the recognized organ of the modern high-church party. They are all contained in the fiftieth number of that periodical.

“ We need not go through the concessions made by the Church to the State in order to prove the unfair and evil use that has been made of them against the Church itself. We use the word un-

* Keble on Tradition, p. 64.


fairness, though it may seem ridiculous to do so, when it is remembered that ten changeable generations of men and a hundred different political factions, have been the aggressor. We are only speaking of the fact, and the fact is all we have to do with, when we are considering the important question, whether the existing relation of the Church and the State is worth having ; worth taking our stand upon ; worth struggling for ; worth the sacrifice of higher ground ; worth anything, in fact, but resignation.

“ It is not too much to say that all religious bodies in England have liberty but the Church. She cannot admit or exclude from her pale at her discretion. She cannot administer, or refuse her ordinances as she thinks fit. She must profane them if called upon. She cannot make new arrangements for new emergencies. She cannot recast her services, or add to them, if need be. She cannot amend one hasty or violent alteration. She cannot either speak or authorize as a whole, for she has lent her signet to the State. She cannot make commissions for missionary or other purposes. She cannot praise or blame ; for attempting the latter, she was deprived of the last remaining semblance of a deliberative body. She cannot put forth a single homily, a single revision of the old homilies, or a single tract, or the simplest comment on her ca-

techism,—all which things every other religious body in the realm can do, and does abundantly.”

“ We are fain to ask ourselves the question, which nothing but the most calamitous circumstances can render loyal and reverential, whether it is our duty to defend and maintain strenuously the present position of the Church, and her *de facto* relations to the State? We do not know where we are. Neither sun nor stars have for many days appeared, and no small tempest lies upon us.”


Of all these passages taken together what are we to think? One is almost tempted to ask, is it possible for them to have been written by persons who are really members and ministers of the Church of England? Could a stronger bill of indictment against that Church have been drawn up by its bitterest opponents? If the English Church be in this state of degradation and debasement; if it be thus dragged at the chariot-wheels of the State; if it be thus manacled in all its limbs and hampered in all its movements; why not burst asunder the bonds of its oppression, and assert its freedom and independence? Or I should say rather, why do not those who take this view of the present condition of the English Church—so inconsistent, according to them, with God’s ordinance, which commits to the ministers of the Church alone the exercise of all spiritual jurisdiction and the right of



ordering and directing all Church ceremonies and observances—why do they not, under these circumstances, set up a genuine Anglo-Catholic Church disenthralled from that State bondage and captivity of which they so loudly complain? We should then be able to understand better what it is that they are really aiming at. If they think that they are seriously aggrieved by the relation in which they at present stand to the State, let that relation, as far at least as they are concerned, be put an end to. Let them come out, and be separate, and no longer touch the unclean thing. Let them resign the State's emoluments, and the grievances as regards themselves will instantly cease. The State says, for such a service you shall have such a reward. They are willing to take the reward, but are reluctant to comply with the conditions. Give up the reward, and the conditions drop with it.

These so-called possessors of holy apostolic orders complain bitterly of the encroachments and usurpations of the State. They complain that their power has been unjustly curtailed—that the authority, which of right belonged to them alone in virtue of their apostolic descent, has been taken away from them, and that the State has assumed to itself the administration of a trust which was committed exclusively to them, and by them only can be properly discharged. These are the accu-

sations and complaints, and for what purpose are they made? Is it to assert the rights of their Church purely as a Church? Is it to get it released from the thralldom of the State? Do they want to dissolve the connexion, to break away from the bondage which so mortifies and annoys them? If so, it is an object completely within their power. There is nothing to hinder them. There is nothing to prevent them from setting up an Anglo-Catholic Church, emancipated from all State shackles, and governing itself by laws of its own ordaining. All this they can do if they please. They have but to say to the State, No more of your endowments, and they are instantly free. Let them do this, and we shall honour them for their fidelity to conscience and duty. We shall have proof that their complaints arose from a sense of the intolerable yoke under which they groaned, being burthened; and because they could no longer bear that the Church, which they revered and loved, should be kept under the controul and government of the State. But seeing what we do, the question recurs, Is this the one great purpose contemplated? Is it their main object to throw off from their necks the yoke of an usurped dominion, and to stand, independently, on their own foundation? If this be the case—if the State's domination be the evil that so wounds and afflicts them, they have the remedy



in their own hands. The means of redress are in their own power. The door is open to them, and they may go forth and assert and exercise their freedom and independence without let or hindrance. But it requires no great insight into human character to perceive that this they will probably not do, and that they have other purposes to answer and other objects to gain. They sigh after the flesh-pots of Egypt. They long for the restoration of their lost privileges. They desire to be reinstated in their old chair of authoritative command, and that their dictum should be received with reverence and submission. Hence their exaggerated representations of the sacredness and dignity of the priestly office, and the efficacy they attach to the priestly administration of ordinances and sacraments.

The Oxford divines object then to the dependence of the Church upon the State, and deprecate the dominion which the latter exercises over the former. But so it was in the beginning, and always has been. It is no new thing: it is no modern innovation. From the first moment of its severance from the Church of Rome this was the condition of its existence,—the mode in which it had its being. It may pretend to have the power of decreeing rites and ceremonies and authority in controversies of faith, but it is only a pretence. Apart from the State it

never possessed and never did exercise such an authority. It came into existence by the will of the State, and has all along been subject to the controul of the State. So observes Mr. Hallam. "The first measure adopted in throwing off the yoke of Rome was to invest the Sovereign with an absolute controul over the Anglican Church* ; so that no part of its coercive discipline could be exercised, but by his authority, nor any laws enacted for its governance without his sanction. This supremacy, indeed, both Henry VIII. and Edward VI. had carried so far that the bishops were reduced almost to the rank of temporal officers taking out commissions to rule their dioceses during the king's pleasure†." And in these commissions it was acknowledged that "all sort of jurisdiction, as well ecclesiastical as civil, flowed originally from the regal power as from a supreme head‡." Mr. Speaker

* "In whatever sense the preposterous claim (of head of the Church) is taken, it is too indicative of the position which she was to hold."—*Tracts for the Times*. No. 86. p. 74.

† Constitutional History, vol. i. p. 252.

‡ Burnet's Hist. of Reform. part ii. At the very commencement of the Reformation it was decreed that "the king's majesty justly and rightfully is and ought to be the supreme head of the Church of England." And by the thirty-sixth canon, every person, before he enters the ministry, must acknowledge that "the king's majesty is, under God, the only supreme governor of the realm, as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal."

Onslow, in mentioning the king's supremacy, declared that "his ecclesiastical jurisdiction and authority is an essential part of our Church Constitution, renewed and confirmed by Parliament, as the supreme legislature of the Church, which has the same extent of true power in the Church of England as any church-legislature ever had; and may therefore censure, excommunicate, deprive, degrade, or may give authoritative directions to the officers of the Church to perform any of them; and may also make laws and canons to bind the whole Church, as they shall judge proper, not repugnant to the laws of God and nature*."

In like manner, Lord Hardwicke asserts "that the constant uniform practice, ever since the Reformation, has been that when any material ordinances or regulations have been made to bind the laity as well as clergy, in matters merely ecclesiastical, they have been either enacted or confirmed by Parliament. Of this proposition the several acts of uniformity are so many proofs, for by those the whole doctrine and worship, the very rites and ceremonies, and the literal form of public prayers are prescribed and established†."

These authorities in proof of the entire dependence of the Church upon the State for its constitution, government, discipline and laws, would

* Edinburgh Review, vol. lxxvi. p. 480. † Ibid. p. 482.

seem to be decisive enough. "But," says Mr. Palmer, "I must protest that the doctrine of the Church of England is not to be determined by preambles of Acts of Parliament or the assertions of lawyers*." By what else then is it to be determined? Does Mr. Palmer mean to set up his judgement in opposition to the concurring authority of Coke, Hale, Holt, and Hardwicke? He may be allowed to say what, in his opinion, it *ought* to be, but this is very different from saying what it actually *is*. He may, therefore, be assured that, on this point, his opinion will have no weight when set against that of the judges just mentioned. Perhaps, however, he means only that the laws thus expounded by them have, in a great measure, become obsolete; that they have fallen into desuetude, and have no longer any practical existence. If so, he is as much opposed to the facts, as to the theory of the case, as will be evident from the statements which I shall now subjoin.

Allusion has already been made to the commissions which the bishops were required to take out in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. Those commissions declared that "all jurisdiction, ecclesiastical and secular, emanates from the king, that it was fitting that those who had hitherto exercised it only precariously, should acknowledge that it was

* Palmer on the Church, vol. ii. p. 270.

conferred by the king's liberality, and should be ready to relinquish it when he judges right*." In the year 1536 injunctions were issued by the king concerning several matters of discipline to be executed in the churches, and it is said by Burnet that the clergy were much troubled at the king's giving such injunctions to them without the consent of the convocation. Again in 1547, another injunction was issued directing the clergy to pray for the king, as supreme head of the Church of England; and the violation of this mandate was made punishable by suspension, deprivation, and excommunication. So too in the reign of Edward VI. several bishops were deprived of their bishoprics by means of a royal commission. Bonner, bishop of London, Gardiner of Winchester, Heath of Worcester, Day of Chichester, and Tonsal of Durham were successively driven from their sees. "These irregularities," says Mr. Palmer, "I do not pretend to justify†."

In the second book of Edward VI. certain ecclesiastical changes were recommended by the king; and the recommendation was preceded by a declaration, "that if the bishops would not take it into consideration, he would do it himself with the aid of his Parliament‡."

* Palmer on the Church, vol. i. p. 359. † Ibid. p. 365.

‡ Preface of the Editor to the two books of Edward VI. p. 17. Oxford, 1838.

Passing over the reign of Queen Mary, when the Church of England was again brought into communion with the Church of Rome, we come next to that of Queen Elizabeth. Almost the first measure which she adopted, on her accession to the throne, was to deprive by act of Parliament all the bishops but one of their episcopate, because they refused to take the oath required by the Act of Supremacy. "No one denies," says Mr. Newman, "that this was a violent proceeding, though unavoidable under her peculiar circumstances*." In the year 1558 a proclamation was issued by her commanding her subjects "to forbear teaching or preaching or giving audience to any manner of doctrine or preaching, other than to the gospels and epistles†." The same royal Lady, by virtue of her supremacy, seems to have disposed of bishops as she pleased. "She suspended Fletcher, bishop of London," says Hallam, "of her own authority." The same author also mentions that "Aylmer, having preached too vehemently against female vanity in dress (which came home to the Queen's conscience) she told her ladies that if the bishop held more discourse on such matters she would fit him for heaven, but he should walk thither without a staff, and leave his mantle behind him." In the same spirit of despotic haughtiness she addressed, to another bi-

* Newman's Romanism, p. 417.

† Price's Hist. of Nonconformity, vol. i. p. 132.

shop of the name of Cox, in consequence of some opposition made by him to a measure which she countenanced, the following laconic epistle: "Proud prelate—you know what you were before I made you what you are; if you do not immediately comply with my request, by G— I will unfrock you*."

King Charles I. also, in a declaration designed to be prefixed to the thirty-nine articles, commanded the clergy not to preach on the subject of predestination. And when Bishop Davenant was thought to have contravened this order in a sermon preached by him in the presence of the king and court, he was summoned to appear before the privy council, and received from them a severe reprimand†.

At a still later period, in the reign of Queen Anne, the celebrated William Whiston published a work on the doctrine of the Trinity which gave great offence to the clergy. Of such consequence indeed did they conceive this publication to be, that the two houses of Convocation assembled to take into consideration its character and merits, and to determine upon the course which it became them to adopt. After due deliberation the work was pronounced by them to be heretical and dangerous. But their censure, before it could be of any force, required the sanction and authority of the queen.

* Hallam's Constitutional History, vol. i. p. 305.

† Fuller's Church History, book xi. p. 138.

That sanction she refused to give, and the result was that her single judgement, even on a question of heresy, prevailed over that of the assembled bishops and clergy, and the proceedings of the Convocation were overruled and set aside*.

A similar proceeding to this took place in the reign of George I. A sermon was preached before the king by Bishop Hoadly on the nature of Christ's kingdom, and afterwards printed by special command. This and another publication of his on the principles of the non-jurors, exhibiting large and liberal views of Christian liberty, excited no little clamour among the clergy of the high-

* Of this transaction Bishop Burnet thus writes: "In 1712, the censure that was passed on Whiston's book in the former sessions (i. e. of the Convocation) had been laid before the queen in due form for her approbation; but at the opening of this sessions in December, the bishops, finding that no return was come from the queen in that matter, sent two of their number to receive Her Majesty's pleasure in it. The queen had put the censure into the hands of some of her ministers to whom she gave it; so a new extract was sent to her; and she said, she would send her pleasure upon it speedily, but none came during the session. So all future proceedings against him were stopped, since the queen did not confirm the step that we had made. This was not unacceptable to some of us, and to myself in particular. I was gone into my diocese when that censure was passed; and I have ever thought that the true interest of the Christian religion was best consulted when nice disputing about mysteries was laid aside and forgotten."—*Whiston's Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 188, 189. ed. 1753.

church party. This led to a meeting of the Convocation for the purpose of examining into the character of these publications. The lower house proceeded so far as to draw up a representation in censure of their doctrines; but before this representation could be brought into the upper house, that assembly was prorogued by a special order of the king*.

In our own time a certain number of bishoprics in Ireland have been suppressed by an act of the legislature; and there can be no doubt, from the bitter terms of disapprobation in which many high-churchmen have expressed themselves concerning it, that, had it been submitted to the consideration and decision of a convocation of the clergy, it would by them have been strenuously resisted and indignantly rejected.

More recently still, as observed in the 'Tracts for the Times,' "a new arrangement of dioceses and sees has been made by authority of a royal commission, composed of members, the greater part of whom were laymen, and *without confirmation of their acts on the part of the Church* †."

The facts, thus briefly detailed, completely make good the point, that the bishops and clergy of the

* See articles, 'Convocation' and 'Hoadly,' in Rees's Cyclopædia.

† Tracts for the Times, No. 33. p. 7.

Church of England have of themselves no power to enjoin or abrogate one single ceremony,—to establish or annul one single article of faith. It is with the sovereign and the parliament that this power is lodged. Bishop Warburton acknowledges that the Church has resigned her independence, and made the Magistrate her supreme Lord, without whose approbation and permission she can direct, order, and decree nothing. And Judge Blackstone observes, that the Act of Elizabeth, called the Act of Uniformity, “was passed with the dissent of all the bishops; and therefore the style of *Lords spiritual* is omitted throughout the whole*.”

What are we to understand then by the language of the twentieth of the thirty-nine articles, that “the Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith?” In what sense are we to take the word ‘Church?’ Does it mean the clergy met in convocation? No. The bishops in their respective dioceses? No. The collective body of episcopal worshippers? No. What then? The sovereign and the parliament. They alone have power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith. And not only does this power legally belong to them, but, as shown in the preceding pages, it is

* Blackstone’s Commentaries, vol. i. p. 156, note; Coleridge’s ed. 1825.

a power which they *have* exercised again and again.

If, then, the Anglo-Catholic divines really think that they are spiritually descended from the apostles, and that by virtue of this descent they are authorized and entitled to rule and govern the Church, it is on their part nothing less than a gross dereliction of principle, or a melancholy instance of pitiable weakness, to bow before the shrine of human greatness, and surrender to the Civil Magistrate the authority and the trust which they solemnly declare Christ delegated solely to the "successors of the apostles." Let them give up the notion of divine right, of apostolic succession, of an authoritative priesthood, or cease to act in a way that puts all such claims and pretensions to shame and confusion.

Connected with the State, and aided by its power and wealth, it is well,—well for freedom, humanity, and justice,—that the Church should be ruled and governed by the State. Separated from it, and resting on her spiritual character alone, her clergy may take the guidance and direction of her affairs in their own keeping, and advance what pretensions they please. Their dream of apostolic descent may be innocently indulged in, as far at least as other churches and communions are concerned, however it may inflate their own vanity, or flatter and ag-

grandize their own self-importance. As long as the State will throw its broad shield of protection alike over all, religious liberty is safe ; and, proudly as the ministers of the Anglo-episcopal Church may boast of their apostolic descent, that boast, when all temporal power has been taken out of their hands, will excite no alarm, and may, peradventure, be the occasion of some little amusement.

LECTURE VII.

HAVING finished our examination of the most distinguishing or characteristic principles of the Oxford school of divinity, I now proceed to the consideration of what constitutes the basis of a genuine Catholic Christian Church. There are churches assuming this name, to which, as it seems to me, they have no just right or title. They call themselves Catholic for the very reasons that would lead me to call them Anti-Catholic. They say that they only are in possession of the true faith which was once delivered to the saints—the faith which was universally held and professed in the first and purest ages. This faith is embodied and expressed in their respective articles and creeds. To these all who are desirous of holding communion with them must give their unfeigned assent. No departure from them is permitted or tolerated. They are to be received as authoritative and decisive. If any doubts arise they are to be solved, not by individual believers for themselves, but by the rulers or representatives of the Church acting for them. By virtue of

the authority lodged in their hands, they are empowered to declare what the true sense of Scripture is, and no private judgement is to be set up against it.

These are the principles of what are called the Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic Churches. And there are other churches, which,—though not claiming for their ministers or clergy positive divine authority—though they do not pretend that any body of men derive, by what is termed apostolic succession, the right of pronouncing absolutely what is true and what is false,—do yet determine that certain opinions shall be believed and a certain profession made of them, before any one can be received into Christian fellowship or communion with them. They may not, like the Roman Catholic or Anglo-Catholic Church, assert in words that they are possessed of divine or apostolic authority, but they do, nevertheless, exercise a power, a jurisdiction, which nothing short of this can justify or excuse. Now I maintain that all churches, arrogating to themselves such pretensions,—let them be called by what names they may,—have nothing in them answering to the title *Catholic*. That is a word expressive of what is general, comprehensive, universal ; and my objection to the Romish Church, to the English Church, to the Presbyterian Church, and various other churches is, that the basis on

which their communion stands is not large and broad as a genuine Catholic Church ought to be, but little, narrow, and confined. My objection to them is that they are not what they pretend to be—that they are not Catholic—that they are limited and exclusive in their principles—that the faith which they require is not the faith “always, everywhere, and by all professed,” but the faith only of a certain number to whom is given the name of ‘orthodox’—that even with them uniformity of profession does not ensure unity of opinion, and that unity of opinion, beyond the acknowledgement and reception of Jesus as the Christ, as the divinely authorized Teacher and Redeemer of man, ought not to be required as a necessary condition of Christian communion. Between the exercise of individual freedom of thought and action, and the authority assumed by the Church of Rome to determine absolutely what is Christian truth and what, therefore, we are to believe and profess, there lies no intermediate ground or position. If we deny to man the rights of reason and conscience, and establish an ecclesiastical domination in their place, it becomes merely a matter of calculation and prudence how far that domination shall be carried—whether it shall or shall not proceed to the length to which it has sometimes proceeded, that is, to the enforcement of its decrees by the infliction of pains and

penalties. The Church of England and other churches besides have substituted, instead of the infallible authority of the Pope or general councils, a priestly authority or a church authority, which is equally inconsistent with the right and the duty of individual judgement. But as this judgement will and must be exercised ; as it is impossible to prevent men from exercising it ; as all attempts to do so have been as vain and impotent as they have been cruel and unjust ; no church, which does not recognize and concede this right, can have any claim to be called a Catholic or universal Church. It becomes at once a limited and exclusive church, not a general and comprehensive one. It draws around it a line of demarcation by which the wisest and best men must often be kept out of its communion.

That our Lord did not intend to found a church or society based on such a principle as this, is evident both from his own declarations and those of his apostles. By them we are told to call no man master on earth ; to consider one only as our Master, even Christ ; and to regard one another as brethren. We are required, of ourselves to judge what is right ; to be fully persuaded in our own minds ; to search the Scriptures, and see whether the things asserted to be true, be so or not ; to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. The unity, therefore,

which Christ and his apostles were desirous of establishing among Christians, must have been a unity of spirit, of feeling and affection, and not a unity of judgement and opinion. After the emphatic condemnation pronounced by our Lord on the authority which was exercised by the princes of the Gentiles, and after the positive disclaimer on the part of the apostle Paul of all dominion over the faith of the first converts, it is quite clear that they never intended the formation of an institution which would be inconsistent with that intellectual and moral freedom which is man's best privilege and noblest birth-right.

"The religion introduced by Christ," says Archbishop Whately, "was manifestly designed by him, —and so understood by his immediate followers— to be a *social* religion. It was not merely a revelation of certain truths to be received, and of practical rules to be observed,—it was not a mere system of doctrines and precepts to be embraced by each individual independently of others—but it was to be a combination of men who should be 'members of the body of Christ'; living stones of one spiritual temple; 'edifying—building up—one another in their faith'; and brethren of one holy family*."

"The Church is one, not as consisting of one society, but because the various societies or churches

* Kingdom of Christ, p. 52.

were at first modelled, and ought still to be so, on the same principles ; and because they enjoy common privileges,—one Lord, one spirit, one baptism.—In short, the foundation of the Church by the apostles was not analogous to the work of Romulus or Solon ; it was not properly, the foundation of Christian societies which occupied them, but the establishment of the principles on which Christians in all ages might form societies for themselves*.”

The chief thing, then, to be considered with respect to any given church is, not whether the form of government, the rules and regulations which it has prescribed for itself, be, in all respects, exactly conformable to those mentioned in the New Testament, but whether such forms and regulations be consistent or inconsistent with the principles and spirit of Christ and his gospel ? If they are inconsistent with those principles and that spirit ; if any body of Christians, constituting themselves a Christian church, demand, as an indispensable condition of fellowship or communion, the belief or the practice of anything which is not clearly in harmony with the laws and commandments of Christ, such demands are unreasonable and unjust, and the church so making them cannot strictly and properly be called a *Catholic* Church. The term Catholic may be applied to churches differing much

* Kingdom of Christ, p. 140.

in their external form and administration. An Episcopal Church may be a Catholic Church. So may a Presbyterian Church. So may an Independent Church. If they are pervaded by the true Christian spirit of love and charity; if they are governed by a careful application of the principles laid down by Christ and his apostles; if they lay no yoke upon the consciences of their members and interfere not with that liberty with which Christ has made all his disciples free, I see not that this title can justly be denied them. But if, after adopting one particular form of government as the most fitting and expedient, as tending most to mutual edification and convenience, they set up claims to be considered as the only true Church of Christ, and authoritatively demand assent to articles and submission to practices which are inconsistent with that individual freedom of opinion and action which Christianity recognizes and enjoins, then they can no longer be regarded as Catholic Churches, because their communion is no longer general and comprehensive, but limited and exclusive. "It would be strange," says Stillingfleet, "if the Church should require more than Christ himself did, and make other conditions of her communion, than our Saviour did of discipleship. What possible reason can be assigned why such things should not be sufficient for communion with a church, which are

sufficient for eternal salvation? What ground can there be why Christians should not stand upon the same terms now which they did in the time of Christ and his apostles? What *charter* hath Christ given to the Church to bind men up to more than himself hath done? or to exclude those from her society who may be admitted into heaven*?"

It may be said, I am aware, that every society, every community has a right to make what laws it pleases for its own regulation and government, and that there is no hardship or injustice in exacting conformity to them as necessary conditions of membership. No injury is done to any one, who, refusing to comply with these conditions, is not allowed to join it. Undoubtedly this is a right belonging to all societies existing of their own accord, and intended to promote purposes of their own choosing. Christians, holding certain peculiar opinions, may form themselves into an association for the furtherance of those opinions, and may, without any impeachment of their charity and liberality, exclude whomsoever they think proper. This they may do with any society or institution originating with and created by themselves. But the case is totally altered when they associate together as a Christian Church—as a society united together by their relation to one common head, and founded expressly

* Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, Preface, p. 8.

upon the principles which he has laid down. They have then to consider not their own partialities and predilections, but the spirit and intentions of their acknowledged Lawgiver. Their communion, as a Christian Church, is one not instituted by them, but for them. It is not for them to determine the conditions on which admission to it shall be granted. That has been already done by their ruler and head. When they meet together in his name, and as subjects of his kingdom, they have no right to impose other terms of citizenship than those prescribed by himself. If they erect any bar to Christian communion which has not been placed there by their common Master, they are displaying an Anti-Catholic spirit, and are invading the prerogative which belongs to him alone. Much misapprehension, as it appears to me, respecting the rights and duties of a Christian Church, has arisen from confounding the rights of an association purely voluntary, depending upon its own will and intended for objects of its own selection, with a society formed in obedience to the injunctions of an authorized teacher and upon principles inculcated by himself. A church, assuming the name of a Church of Christ, should be governed by the laws and spirit of Christ. No man's liberty is invaded by requiring him to conform to such outward regulations and observances, as the majority of the society to

which he is desirous of belonging, may see fit to ordain. If any number of persons meet together for the purpose of freely discussing all questions—even then, it will be necessary to attend to certain forms or rules in order to prevent the meeting from falling into confusion and disorder. It would be absurd for any one to pretend that his liberty is restrained, because he is called upon to submit to such conventional arrangements as these. So in the Church of Christ there must be a certain order and method observed by all its members—since no society could possibly exist without them. These are matters which Christ has left open—left to be determined by considerations of fitness and expediency—but he has not left open the *principles* on which the society should be constituted, and the laws by which it should be governed. These are clearly and plainly stated, and no church that violates them—that acts inconsistently with the liberal and generous spirit which they breathe, can justly be entitled to the name of Catholic.

I may perhaps be allowed to introduce here a familiar illustration or two for the purpose of making my meaning better understood.

I will suppose, then, that in some foreign country where a number of Englishmen reside, a meeting is summoned, for some common purpose, of all who bear that name. When come together, the

order and form of their proceedings are of course left to the decision of those who are assembled. Now if any one presented himself to take part in the business to be transacted who was not an Englishman, there would be no breach of propriety or kindness in excluding him from the assembly. But suppose an attempt was made to exclude one who *was* an Englishman,—not on the ground of character,—not because he was chargeable with any kind of misconduct,—but because he belonged to a certain profession, or because he entertained certain opinions ; who does not feel that, in such a case, the attempt to deprive him of the privileges of his birth would be a gross infringement of the principle on which the meeting was called together ? If, indeed, it had been announced as a meeting of lawyers or physicians, they who were not lawyers or physicians could not justly complain of their exclusion ; or if it had been a meeting of persons entertaining peculiar political or religious opinions, no fault could fairly be found for refusing admittance to those who held different sentiments. Let people be allowed to form what associations they please, and to impose such conditions of membership as to them seem fit, as long as they do so in their own name, and for purposes chosen by themselves. But when they meet together in the name of Christ to form a society upon the principles laid down by

him, to carry out his designs, and for the accomplishment of his purposes, then they have no longer the choice of their own path, but the course which they are to follow is marked out for them. They have no liberty to alter the terms on which their communion as a Christian Church is to be based, or to depart from the objects which that communion was intended to promote. If they meet as Englishmen, no one sustaining that character can be justly excluded on account of his condition, profession, or creed; and if they meet as Christians, no one can fairly be rejected, because, while admitting the authority of Christ and his apostles, he puts a different construction upon their language, in some instances, from what others do. The Christian name fully and properly belongs to him who is willing and ready to make the same confession of his belief in Christ which, in the days of the apostles, was *the one*, and the *only* one, then required. And what was this? The writings of the apostles will tell us. "These are written," says John at the end of his gospel, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." So also he writes in his first Epistle: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*." When the apostle Peter made this confession, "Thou art the Christ,

* 1 John v. 1.

the Son of God," our Lord was perfectly satisfied, and demanded no other. Martha's confession, made in similar language, met with similar acceptance. In like manner, when Paul and Silas were asked by the jailer what he should do to be saved, they replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*." And, in the Epistle to the Romans, Paul, after expressing his wishes for the salvation of his countrymen the Jews, states, in a few words, the faith which he earnestly desired them to embrace and profess: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved†." To maintain, therefore, that they who are ready to avow their belief in Christ in the very form and words which were approved by our Lord himself—in the exact terms and expressions adopted by the apostle Peter, and prescribed by the apostle Paul—in the precise language which was made use of when anything like a confession of faith was made or demanded,—to say, that they who are thus ready to conform to apostolic precept and to follow apostolic example are nevertheless unfit to be received into the communion of a Christian Church, is an outrageous affront to common sense, and a gross violation of that Catholic spirit by which alone the various

* Acts xvi. 31.

† Rom. x. 9.

members of the Christian community can be formed into one body

Whatever rules or regulations, then, any number of Christians, associated together for the promotion of a particular object, may see fit to ordain for their mutual convenience and comfort, they have an undoubted right so to do ; but, as it appears to me, and for the reasons just assigned, they have *not* the right (that is, consistently with the injunctions of Christ and the spirit of his gospel), when they form themselves into a Christian church, to require from any one, as a necessary and indispensable preliminary to its communion, the profession of any doctrine or opinion which Christ and his apostles have not expressly authorized. When, therefore, a body of men, calling themselves a Christian Church, act upon any other principle, and declare that their opinion, and theirs alone, is to be received as the standard of truth, they are throwing stumbling-blocks in each other's way, and are fixing upon the conscience fetters which it ought not to be made to wear. In the Church of Christ there should be a combination of the greatest freedom with the greatest charity, liberty to exercise our own judgements, without imposing the slightest shackles upon the consciences of others. Where these rights are secured, all minor differences sink into comparative insignificance and unimportance. The only basis

on which a genuine Catholic church can be erected is that which is large enough and broad enough to admit every sincere disciple of Christ on the terms prescribed in the New Testament. Anything narrower than this—anything more restricted and confined, should be a signal to every man, within whose breast burns the faintest spark of the love of truth and freedom, to keep aloof from it, and go in search of another and, it may be, a humbler temple, but whose doors are wide open to receive every Christian who is sincerely desirous of entering in.

But where, it may be asked, is such a temple to be met with—where is such a church to be found? You call your church a Unitarian church, and by that very designation you necessarily exclude from your worship and communion those who are not Unitarians, and, consequently, you have no right to call your church a Catholic Church. In answer to this I have no hesitation in saying, that I should have been glad if we could have dispensed with the word Unitarian: it would have been as well if we could have designated ourselves by a term which to many would have been less objectionable, and, in appearance at least, more Catholic. I should have rejoiced if we could have called ourselves Catholic Christians instead of Unitarian Christians. There would have been no better word by which to have distinguished ourselves than this.

But as it had long been employed to denote other bodies of Christians, the use of it by us as a distinctive title would not only have led to much misapprehension and confusion, but would have exposed us to accusations of artifice, insincerity, and fraud. Some discriminating term was necessary, and, after the word Catholic, I know of none so general and comprehensive, and at the same time so appropriate and characteristic, as the term Unitarian. It *does* define strictly and properly the nature of our worship. One of our chief differences from other Christians consists in the restriction of religious worship to *one* object,—to *one* being or person. We adhere literally to the commands of Christ, which direct us to pray to one God only; we take for our model the form of prayer which he himself has left us; we follow his own example, he having always prayed to one God the Father, and having frequently joined in the worship of the temple and the synagogue, which was strictly Unitarian worship. Now all Christians are so far agreed with us as to admit, in words at least, that there is only one God, and that that one God is to be the object of our highest adoration and homage. They do not deny that the Being called the Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the proper object of worship. They *can*, therefore, unite with us in our devotional services. There is nothing in

those services to prevent them from doing so. They do not and they cannot say, that their prayers ought not to be addressed to the Being called the Father. If they did they could not use the Lord's Prayer, for that, like our prayers, is addressed to the Father only. By their own admission, then, our worship is so far a Catholic worship. It is inclusive of all ; it is exclusive of none. This cannot be said of Trinitarian worship. No consistent Unitarian can join in that worship. It necessarily excludes a considerable body of believers in Christ. It is not therefore like ours, universal and comprehensive, and therefore not Catholic. The worship of our churches is one in which all Christians can, without any violation of principle, unite. Even a Trinitarian will find nothing in our devotional services to offend him. There may be omissions which he would wish to have supplied ; but as far as they go, his thoughts and feelings may go with them. They contain nothing abhorrent to the one, nothing revolting to the other. He will, I think, find nothing in them condemnatory of any peculiar theological views which he may have been led to embrace,—nothing that can disturb or disquiet his devotional feelings. If there *were* anything of this kind,—if they contained anything injuriously reflecting upon his peculiar opinions, he could not, I admit, any longer unite with us in our worship ;

and then the Catholic principle would be wanting. But when, as I believe it to *be* the case, and as it certainly *should* be the case, no censure of other men's belief is conveyed in our forms of prayer, then the Catholic principle is strictly preserved, and our worship is one in which all Christians can cordially and sincerely join with us.

The basis of our union, as a Church, is simply that of agreement as to the object of worship, the divine commission and authority of our spiritual lawgiver, and the right of every individual to interpret for himself the records of revelation, and to form, hold, and profess whatever opinions that interpretation may lead him to adopt. The principle on which our religious communion is founded is wide and comprehensive,—designed to include all who are content with scriptural forms of worship and scriptural terms of fellowship.

I do not mean to say that our churches are, in all respects, what they should be. In their organization and government there are, no doubt, many defects; they need, probably, more of superintendence, order and discipline. The mode, too, of conducting their public services may admit of various improvements. Still I must maintain, that, in the great essential requisites of a Catholic Christian Church, they are not materially deficient. Our communion is open to all who acknowledge “Jesus

to be the Christ, the Son of God." We draw no narrow line of exclusion; we lay down no unauthorized terms of admission. To every one who can unite with us in the worship of one God, the Father, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, we hold out the right hand of fellowship, and welcome him as a friend and a brother.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor, after quoting the words of the apostle Paul, which are contained in Romans x. 9*, observes, "this is the great and entire complexion of a Christian's faith; and since salvation is promised to the belief of this creed, either a snare is laid for us, with a purpose to deceive us, *or else nothing is of prime or original necessity to be believed but this, Jesus Christ our Redeemer.*"

"It has never gone well with the Church of Christ," says Archbishop Wake in one of his sermons, "since men have been so narrow-spirited as to mix the controversies of faith with their public forms of worship, and have made their liturgies, instead of being offices of devotion to God, become tests and censures of the opinions of their brethren †."

* "This is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."—See *Liberty of Prophesying*, p. 9.

† Sermons and Discourses on several occasions, p. 282. ed. 1690.

Dr. Paley contends, that “to state any doctrine in a confession of faith with a greater degree of precision than the Scriptures have done, is in effect to say, that the Scriptures have not stated it with precision enough; in other words, that the Scriptures are not sufficient.” And also, “that keeping people out of churches who might be admitted consistently with every end of public worship, and excluding men from communion who desire to embrace it upon the terms that God prescribes, is certainly not encouraging, but rather causing men to forsake the assembling of themselves together*.” In the same tract he says, “Let the Church discharge from her liturgy controversies unconnected with devotion, and let her try what may be done by worshipping God in that generality of expression in which he himself has left some things—and the few who, after all, shall think it necessary to recede from her communion will acknowledge the necessity to be inevitable†.”

“The unity of the Church,” observes Bishop Stillingfleet, “is a unity of love and affection, and not a bare uniformity of practice or opinion‡.”

These are the principles upon which, not a *Roman* Catholic or an *Anglo-Catholic*, but a genuine *Chris-*

* Works, vol. iii. pp. 311, 312. ed. 1825.

† Ibid. vol. iii. pp. 309, 310.

‡ Irenicum, Preface, p. 10.

tian Catholic Church should be founded. These are the principles which many of our old illustrious English divines have nobly advocated and defended. These are the principles which, I trust, do and will guide our conduct and proceedings. And these are the principles which, I pray, may more and more prevail in all communions.

“What is a church? Let truth and reason speak,
And they will say, the faithful, pure, and meek,
From every fold, the one selected race,
Of all communions, and in every place.”

CRABBE.

LECTURE VIII.

WHEN I first entered upon the course of lectures which are now drawing to a conclusion, I stated that my chief object was to put you in possession of the distinguishing principles of that party in the English Church who are commonly known by the name of Puseyites, and to lay before you the grounds and reasons on which it appeared to me they should be opposed and rejected. That object has, I trust, been in some degree answered. It has been shown, I think, that the foundations on which such opinions rest are so thoroughly weak and unsound—are so entirely wanting in solidity and strength, that the first strong blast of a keen and searching inquiry is sufficient to overthrow them. In the present lecture I propose to take a brief and rapid review of the ground over which we have lately travelled.

The first point to which our attention was directed related to the nature and constitution of a Christian Church. What are we to understand by the word Church, and what directions were given


by Christ and his apostles with respect to its general administration and government? I observed that, in common with Hooker and other celebrated divines of the Church of England itself, I did not consider that any particular form of Church polity was prescribed by Christ and his apostles, but that all matters relating to external regulations and arrangements were, for the most part, to be determined by the exigencies of the occasion,—by the peculiar situation and circumstances of those for whose benefit they were designed. In considering, therefore, what was the primitive or apostolic form of church government and discipline, the inquiry was made, not because I regarded any one particular form to be always binding upon Christians of all ages and all countries, but principally because an acquaintance with the original state of the Christian Church will completely lay bare and expose the absurdity of those lofty pretensions to exclusive authority and power which have been raised upon the ground of the supposed constitution of the early Church.

One of the first questions, then, to be settled is, What are we to understand by the word Church? Notwithstanding its evident signification in the New Testament, various senses have been attached to it, and in this way it has been made to minister to much delusion and mischief. Thus,

when a certain species of property is called the property of the Church, the word Church is used to signify, not an assembly of the people, not the general body of Christians, but the clergy,—a sense in which the word is perverted from its true and legitimate signification. The term rendered Church, first implied, according to its use in the New Testament, a religious assembly among Christians. Its original and strict meaning is an assembly of persons who meet together for any specific purpose, and so it was used by the ancients. By the apostles, however, and since their time, it has been consecrated to the purposes of religion : and accordingly, any assembly of Christians, meeting together to worship God, whether in a public building, or in a private house, is a Church of Christ.

The ministry of the Christian Church consists, it is said, of three distinct orders, bishops, priests, and deacons—designated by different names, and exercising different powers.

Now if Jesus had intended that the ministry of his Church should consist of three orders, and that in this form it should be transmitted through all succeeding ages, it is not a little remarkable that he should have given no directions whatever in relation to such an appointment. Not a hint is to be found in the whole four gospels that he designed to establish or perpetuate any form of government



like the one just mentioned. He said nothing of three orders of the ministry—nothing about bishops or deacons—nothing about any particular mode of ordination—nothing about any description of persons by whom this ceremony was to be administered. And what is the natural conclusion from this, but that he did not think it important what mode his followers should adopt with respect to the outward forms of religion, provided they were careful to imbibe its spirit and to live by its precepts?

That the terms Elder and Bishop are given in the New Testament to the same individuals is a point, I think, clear beyond all dispute. The passage (Acts xx. 17, 28) to which I have before referred is quite sufficient to establish this position. By the advocates of modern Episcopacy we are told that to the order of bishops alone belongs the power of ordaining ministers, and that all ministers out of the pale of Episcopacy have usurped an office to which they have no claim or title, and are therefore guilty of violating the prescribed rules of the gospel. When such doctrines are maintained and such charges are advanced, it is of some little importance to inquire whether there is any real foundation for them. In this case, it must have appeared, from what has been before said, that the Scriptures furnish no ground from which such a conclusion can be fairly drawn. It is nothing to the purpose

to refer to the mere use of the word Bishop by the apostles and some of the early Christian authors. The question is, in what sense was it used by them? Evidently, I answer, in its original sense of overseer or inspector—one who has any care or charge. The primitive bishops were persons selected to superintend the affairs of the little fraternity of Christian believers in the place where they dwelt. They are called indiscriminately bishops or presbyters. I do not mean to say that these two words, though denoting the same class of persons, are exactly of the same import. The word presbyter or elder has more immediate reference to the station and character of the person, and the word bishop to the office which such a person might hold. All I contend for is, that in the New Testament, bishop and presbyter do not imply different offices.

The first change that took place after the times of the apostles was that of making the most distinguished of the elders or presbyters a constant president in their assemblies, and appropriating to him exclusively the title of Bishop—a title, observe, which had previously been common to all the presbyters or elders. The next step in the change was made by converting this bishop into *the* bishop, not of one church or congregation, but of a certain district, including several congregations. This was

called a diocese, and hence the origin of diocesan Episcopacy.

Instead, then, of there being three orders of ministers, there was originally but one. But is there not, in the New Testament, mention made of deacons? And were they not an order of the ministry? So they are said to have been, but for this there does not appear to be any valid reason,—any reason indeed deserving of the name. It is impossible for me, in this rapid summary, to detail the evidence before adduced in proof of the assertion which I have now made. Suffice it to observe that I showed, on a former occasion, that those called deacons were a set of persons appointed in the first Christian churches to take charge of the funds for the poor, and to see to their proper and faithful administration. Though called deacons afterwards, these trustees were not so denominated at first. Their office was wholly of a temporal nature, and made no part of the ministry properly so called. There is no ground, then, for saying that deacon was a term denoting the third order in the ministry. On the contrary, the word deacon is a general term applied at first to any one who was a servant in the cause of the Gospel. And, accordingly, we find that Paul in one of his Epistles speaks of certain brethren as able ministers (the original is, deacons) of the New Testament. And Paul and Apollos

themselves, whom no Episcopalian would rank in any but the *first* order of ministers, are styled deacons.

Where, then, I would ask, is the authority to be found in the New Testament for those different orders of Christian ministers, which are considered by the Anglo-Catholic divines essential to the constitution of a genuine Christian church? No scriptural precedent or sanction for it can be found.

We are also told by the Oxford divines that to the order of bishops alone belongs the power of ordaining ministers, and that no ministers otherwise appointed can be justly said to have received ordination at all. They have usurped an office to which they have no title: they have undertaken the discharge of duties for which they have not been invested with the necessary qualifications, and no value or benefit, therefore, can attach to their ministrations. What, then, are we to understand by 'ordination' as received and practised in the first ages? Was it the communication by the hands of a bishop of some extraordinary power or divine right and authority, not before possessed? It was nothing of the kind. It was simply prayer for the blessing of God, accompanied with the laying of the hands of those who prayed on the heads of the persons who were prayed for. But this ceremony was not *peculiar* to the occasion of introducing any

one to the ministerial office. It was a custom in the East, when blessing a person, to lay the hand on his head. This was all that was done in the much misunderstood ceremony of ordination. The minister or deacon, the presbyter or bishop was elected by the people, and then supplication was made to God for his blessing to accompany the transaction. Could anything be more rational, more proper, or more simple?

There is also this fact to be found in the Scriptures in refutation of the extravagant claims set up for the virtue and efficacy of episcopal ordination, that the ceremony itself, instead of being performed by any peculiar order of the ministry, by those termed bishops, was administered not only by presbyters, but by those who bore the name neither of bishops nor presbyters. Paul and Barnabas were ordained by the hands of three brethren of the Church at Antioch, called, in the Acts of the Apostles, prophets and teachers; thus showing that even the first in rank and order received ordination at the hands of those who were below them in office and authority. So utterly false and groundless is the doctrine of the exclusive validity of episcopal ordination.

If the Oxford divines are thus mistaken in their views of the constitution of the primitive church, —if there were not three orders of ministers,—if

bishops and presbyters, instead of being two distinct orders, were, in fact, one and the same,—if deacons, as they are called, instead of being a third order in the ministry, were, in reality, no order of the ministry at all,—and if ordination, instead of being a rite appropriated only to the ministerial office, and administered by no hands but those of bishops, was a rite employed on other occasions and for other purposes, and signified by the hands of teachers and presbyters, it follows that the very foundation on which is built the Anglo-Catholic system of church authority, is swept away. Nothing then remains on which the doctrine of what is termed ‘Apostolic Succession’ can rest. But with this course of argument I did not content myself, but proceeded to show that independently of all these considerations, and looking at the question apart from its relation to other points, this leading doctrine of the Puseyite school is justified neither by the language of Scripture nor the evidence of history.


With respect to Scripture, the defenders of ‘apostolic succession’ are ready to confess that the ground on which they here stand is narrow and weak. They admit that the scriptural proof in favour of their doctrine is poor and scanty, and therefore to be little relied on. But they argue that this is the case as respects other doctrines,

which yet are received by the orthodox, not only as true, but as most important and essential. They say that if the doctrine of apostolic succession *be* wanting in scriptural evidence, it is the case also with that of the Trinity and of original sin, and that the same reasons which cause us to receive the one should induce us to receive the other. Of course this affords no satisfaction to those who, for the deficiency of scripture authority, reject both alike. Something like an argument, however, has been attempted to be raised on the supposed analogy between the Jewish priesthood and the Christian ministry. But Archbishop Whately and the lamented Dr. Arnold have demonstratively shown that no such analogy exists, and not only so, but that from the difference in the design and character of the two bodies, a directly contrary conclusion may be drawn. The argument of the Anglo-Catholics, if it can be called argument, is this: as Aaron and his family were appointed by God to be the exclusive priests of Israel, so Jesus Christ appointed the apostles and their successors, by means of episcopal ordination, to be exclusively the priests or ministers of the new dispensation.

There is no doubt that to Aaron and his descendants the priesthood, under the old dispensation, was confined. Here all is plainly set down. On this point there can be no mistake. According to

the law of Moses, the Jewish religion was to have its priests, and these priests were to belong to the family of Aaron. But where is anything similar to this to be met with in the New Testament ? Where are the first preachers of the gospel denominated priests ? Where is it said that they are to consist, first, of the twelve apostles, and, next, of their lineal descendants, by episcopal ordination, for all time to come ? I can find nothing of the kind in any part of the New Testament. In the Old Testament an order of men *are* distinctly pointed out as those only to whom the priesthood is to belong ; but in the New Testament what class or order of men are *there* set forth as the only destined possessors of the Christian ministry ?

Next comes the question of historical fact, with the argument founded upon it. It is asserted, then, that the bishops can trace up their episcopal origin to the apostles themselves ; that by means of the rite of ordination they are descended in a direct line from them, and consequently inherit a peculiar grace, power and authority,—such as belong to no other persons. In answer to this, it was, I think, clearly shown that the fact of such a succession cannot be established ; that the very first links in the chain are wanting ; that we do not know whether Peter himself was ever at Rome at all ; that there is no saying who the first bishops or



presbyters of that city were,—some of the Fathers naming one, some another, and others another still,—and that there is not a single prelate living who can, with any degree of certainty, establish his lineal descent from the apostles. But suppose that he could,—suppose that the fact itself could be ascertained of who the immediate followers of the apostles were, and that all existing bishops could, through them, trace up their origin to the apostles, there is no proof that such a succession carries with it the privilege and the authority now claimed for it. The fact, I say again, cannot be established, but if it could it would prove nothing. The conclusion attempted to be drawn from it is a perfectly gratuitous assumption, having no warrant or support whatever from reason or Scripture. And so say some of the best and most accomplished divines of the Church of England itself.

After examining the doctrine of what is termed ‘Apostolic Succession,’ I next directed your attention to the opinions set forth by the Tractarian party in favour of the authority of Tradition. One of the distinguishing principles of Protestantism is, (to make use of the common phrase) the sufficiency of Scripture; that is, that the Scriptures alone contain a true and authentic account of the Christian religion, and that their statements alone are to be received as authoritative and decisive. In opposition

to this it is contended by the Anglo-Catholics, that there is another authentic source of information, besides that which we have in the books of the New Testament,—that in the writings of the Fathers are contained the traditions of the Church, and that in those traditions are embodied many things concerning Christ and his doctrine which, though not recorded in the New Testament, or only obscurely intimated there, are nevertheless to be received and regarded as genuine Christian verities. To this it was replied, that if we could ascertain with anything like *certainty* that, in the writings of the Fathers or the traditions of the Church, there is to be found something which Christ said or did over and above what is contained in the New Testament, it would no doubt be entitled to as much attention and consideration as that which now lies before us in the pages of Scripture. But we contend that no such certainty is to be obtained—that the traditionary matter relating to Christ and his apostles which the Fathers have delivered to us, is for the most part of such a character as at once to set at defiance all claim to credit or respect; that the credulity, the superstition, and the weakness of judgement evinced by them necessarily awaken a degree of suspicion and distrust totally incompatible with the deference and submission required to be paid to them. Besides there is no uniformity or consistency in the

traditions recorded by them, or in their expositions of Christian doctrine. Some of the things mentioned by the Fathers as traditions of the Church are directly at variance with those contained in Scripture. Some of them are intrinsically absurd and ridiculous. Some related by one Father are contradicted by those which are related by another Father, and all of them are mere hearsay reports, unauthenticated by any trustworthy testimony whatsoever. In addition to this we say there is no occasion for going out of the New Testament to gain a full and accurate knowledge of all that Christ taught and did ; of the great facts and essential principles of the Christian religion. All that it is important for us to know and understand is contained *there*. Christianity is not a religion of detail—of minute precepts and specific directions—but a revelation of principles, and that revelation we have unfolded to us not only in the discourses of Christ, but still more in his conduct and life, in his actions and character. All that is needful and essential we have *there*, and if that should fail in imparting to us a just understanding of what Christianity is, we shall look elsewhere in vain.

It is easy to see why so much stress is laid upon, and so much importance is attached to the doctrine of Tradition by the advocates of Church authority, for it is one of the great means by which such au-

thority is maintained and upheld. For,—let it be admitted that the Scriptures are not of themselves sufficient, that they require to be explained and interpreted by the traditions of the Church, and that those traditions lie scattered over the voluminous writings of men called the Fathers, extending over a period of five centuries, and needing almost the whole of a long life to read and understand them,—it is obvious at once that the great bulk of the people, that almost every one not belonging to the clerical profession, must look to the clergy for the purpose of learning what the traditions of the Church are, and what is the sense which they put upon Scripture. Accordingly they *do* thus apply the doctrine in question. They say to the people, You must come to us to learn what are the traditions of the Fathers, and what is the voice of the universal Church. We are the only proper organs, the only authorized interpreters of that voice. The Scriptures are not to be read without the aid and the light of tradition. That is to be your instructor and guide in their interpretation, and for that you must look to us. Your own private judgement must never be opposed to the judgement of the Church. You have no right to judge for yourselves what the truth, as contained in Scripture, is. The Church is the sole depository of the truth, and what the Church says is to be learned from us.

This denial of the right of private judgement constitutes another characteristic feature of the Oxford school of divinity. One lecture was almost entirely devoted to the assertion and vindication of this right, and to the refutation of the objections which have been urged against it. In this lecture I first endeavoured to show that the right of private judgement is one with which it is impossible to dispense. It *has* been exercised—*will* be exercised—and *must* be exercised. There is no possibility of doing without it. The man who assumes to himself infallibility and asks me on that account to submit my judgement to his, appeals in this very instance and by this very act to my private judgement. I am required to judge whether it is fitting and proper for me to surrender up my own reason to his. He says perhaps that *he* cannot err, or that he has authority to declare to me what the truth is,—which truth it is my duty to receive. It may be so. It may be that this extraordinary privilege has been conferred upon him. But how am I to know it? Am I at once to admit it upon his bare assertion? No one can contend that I ought—for if so, it might and would lead to all kinds of contrary faiths, principles, and practices. What then am I to do? I must ask him to furnish me with the necessary credentials for the authority which he claims. He must lay before me the reasons why I

should submit my understanding to his. But who is to judge of the sufficiency of these credentials,—who is to decide upon the validity of these reasons? Who, but the individual to whom the claim is addressed, and from whom submission is exacted? So that, after all, private judgement must be exercised, and that too upon the most important question that can be proposed to a rational being. He who chooses to abide by another man's opinion and not his own, must first determine that it is better for him thus to act. He comes to this conclusion, and can come to it only by the exercise of his own judgement. He thinks that on certain points it is better for him to accede to the opinions which others have arrived at than to form his own.

The competency to judge on religious subjects must not, as I before observed, be confounded with the right. The right in all cases belongs to all; but not to all, in all cases, belongs the competency. There is a duty, an obligation, connected with the right, as there is indeed with all rights; and one great part of that duty consists in seeing that, before coming to a decision upon any important subject submitted to our examination, we endeavour to acquire the qualifications necessary for forming a just decision. The *right*, no doubt, is more thought of and talked about than the *duty*,—the *obligation* which it involves; and hence the import-

ance, while contending for the right, of insisting upon the necessity and importance of preparing and qualifying ourselves to make a proper and faithful use of it*. Thus guarded and explained, the right of private judgement is one of the most indisputable and inalienable privileges of our nature.

The last lecture was occupied with a consideration of the principles essential to the constitution, not of a *Roman* Catholic or an *English* Catholic, but of a *Christian* Catholic Church. I then observed, that many Churches calling themselves Catholic are founded on principles which appear to me to be most Anti-Catholic. Instead of fixing upon the points in which Christians are agreed, as the basis and bond of their association, they have had respect chiefly to the points on which they differed; and instead of making the foundation of their communion as wide and comprehensive as

* I cannot withhold Hallam's admirable observations on Chillingworth's position, "that the Bible only is the religion of Protestants, and that each man's own reason is to be its interpreter." "This," says he, "must always be understood with the condition that the reason itself shall be competently enlightened. . . . The case is parallel in jurisprudence, medicine, mechanics, and every human science: any one man, *primâ facie*, may be a competent judge, but all men are *not* so. It is hard to prove that there is any different rule for theology; but parties will always contend for extremes; for the rights of bigots to think for others, and the rights of fools to think for themselves."—*Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, vol. iii. p. 77.

possible, they have sought rather to make it as narrow and contracted as they could. Of course there must be an acknowledgement of some great general principles held in common, or there could be no union. The sectarian spirit, as I have observed on another occasion, is, needlessly to multiply those principles, and rigidly to define them. The Catholic spirit is to reduce them to the fewest possible number, and to give them a large and generous meaning. Every man who acknowledges "that Jesus is the Christ and that God hath raised him from the dead," is so far a Christian, and is entitled under that character to all the benefits and comforts of Christian communion. This, I conceive, to be the only basis of a truly Catholic Church, and upon this basis our Church (whatever be its defects in other respects) is founded. The worship here offered is the worship prescribed by Christ himself. It is expressive, not of the peculiarities of individual opinion, but of the common faith of Christians. It is the vehicle, not of the sentiments by which we are divided, but of the feelings which unite us together; which make us all one; which bring us all in humility and dependence before the mercy-seat of Him who is the Father of all the families of the earth, and alike the Rewarder of all who truly and diligently seek him.

NOTE TO PAGE 166.

“ The first century was characterized by great simplicity of doctrine. The primitive Christians, it is true, appear to have sometimes applied the title *God* to Christ, but in a sense totally different from that in which it came afterwards to be attributed to him. His miraculous birth, his Messiahship, and the state of glory to which he was advanced after a painful and ignominious death,—God having ‘raised him up,’ and ‘highly exalted him,’ making him ‘both Lord and Christ,’ for the ‘suffering of death’ crowning him with ‘glory and honour,’—were circumstances on which they dwelt with wonder, delight, and gratitude; and they did not hesitate occasionally to bestow, on a being thus favoured and exalted, some of the epithets of Divinity. Thus they sometimes call Christ, God, and Jewish usage fully sanctioned such an application of the term. Magistrates and judges are repeatedly denominated Gods in the Old Testament, and our Saviour alludes to this application of the word as well known to the Jews; John x. 35. It is not surprising that the primitive Christians, who as Jews, were familiar with this use of the term, should sometimes apply it to their master. Accustomed to hear the great and good prophets, judges, and magistrates of their nation called Gods, they would very naturally suppose that there could be no impiety in occasionally bestowing the title on Jesus, whose extraordinary birth, character, and offices were so fitted to inspire admiration and love. They never, however, thought of confounding him with the One Infinite Father, or making him in any sense his equal. The title in question was one of dignity and honour, applied primarily to the Supreme One, but in a secondary sense to beings inferior to him, to angels and men; and this use of it was too common to occasion any surprise, error, or embarrassment.

“ But when Christianity, in the second century, began to number among its converts men wearing the garb and claiming the character and name of philosophers, this simplicity of faith, which till then remained, became corrupted. Educated as Platonists of the Alexandrian school, these philosophers were familiar with the belief of a sort of second God, *logos*, or reason, originally emanating from the fountain of the Divinity. This doctrine they took along with them on embracing the religion of Jesus; and misled

by some obscure and figurative expressions employed by the Evangelists and Apostles, especially by John, they gradually incorporated it with the Christian system. Thus Jesus, who, before this time, had been called divine, and sometimes God, solely on account of his miraculous birth and exalted character and office, now began to be termed such in a different sense, that is, as a being from eternity existing in God, not personally, but as an attribute, as his reason, wisdom, or energy; which, a little before the creation of the world, was emitted, or thrown out, that is, converted into a real being or person, a kind of second God. After this event, he became, as these Fathers imagined, a being wholly distinct from God, was inferior to him, and his agent in forming and governing the world. They never apply to him the title 'God over all'; never ascribe to him supreme divinity. They did not suppose him eternal, except as an attribute of the Father. He existed in God, as reason exists in us, so existed from eternity, a mere quality or attribute. He was produced, that is, became a real being, when God, being about to create the world, had occasion to use his ministrations. Thus, as an attribute, he was, in their view, eternal; as a person, or being, he was not so, having been begotten or made (for they originally used both terms) in time. This is what these Fathers meant by the generation of the Son, which, as we have seen, was regarded by them as temporal, not as eternal.

"The *logos*, or Son, being then produced, afterwards became incarnate, was made flesh, and became susceptible of suffering, and, as they thought, actually suffered, in his whole nature. To suppose that part of his nature was exempt from suffering, though deemed orthodox now, was then pronounced heresy.

"Such is a general view of the doctrine of the Fathers, who were converts from Platonism, during the second and third centuries. This doctrine, which contains the germ of the Trinity, was introduced into the Church by Justin Martyr, who wrote about the middle of the second century*."

The learned writer from whose article the above has been extracted, then proceeds to justify the view thus taken of the doctrine of the Fathers, by specific references to the language of Tatian, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Irenæus, Tertullian and Origen. This it was once intended should have been inserted as an appendix to these lectures, but that intention has been abandoned on account of the length to which it would have extended.

* Christian Examiner. Boston, U.S. vol. ii. pp. 24—26.





